

# The Futures of University Planning in 2040

Using Foresight Analysis to Help SCUP Look Ahead, Adapt and Innovate

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# Overview for Today

## SCUP Members as Futurists and Thought-Partners

1. **Surfacing the Room** (10 mins)
2. **Foresight as a Tool** for Building Personal and Organizational Readiness and Resilience (10 mins)
3. An **Overview** of Lisa's SCUP Fellowship Project (5 mins)
4. **Futuring:** Identifying Drivers of Change and Soliciting Your Perspectives (35 mins)
5. Q&A

Surfacing Who **Is** in “The Room”

# About Foresight and Futurist Methodologies

# Why foresight?



A future.  
Explored.

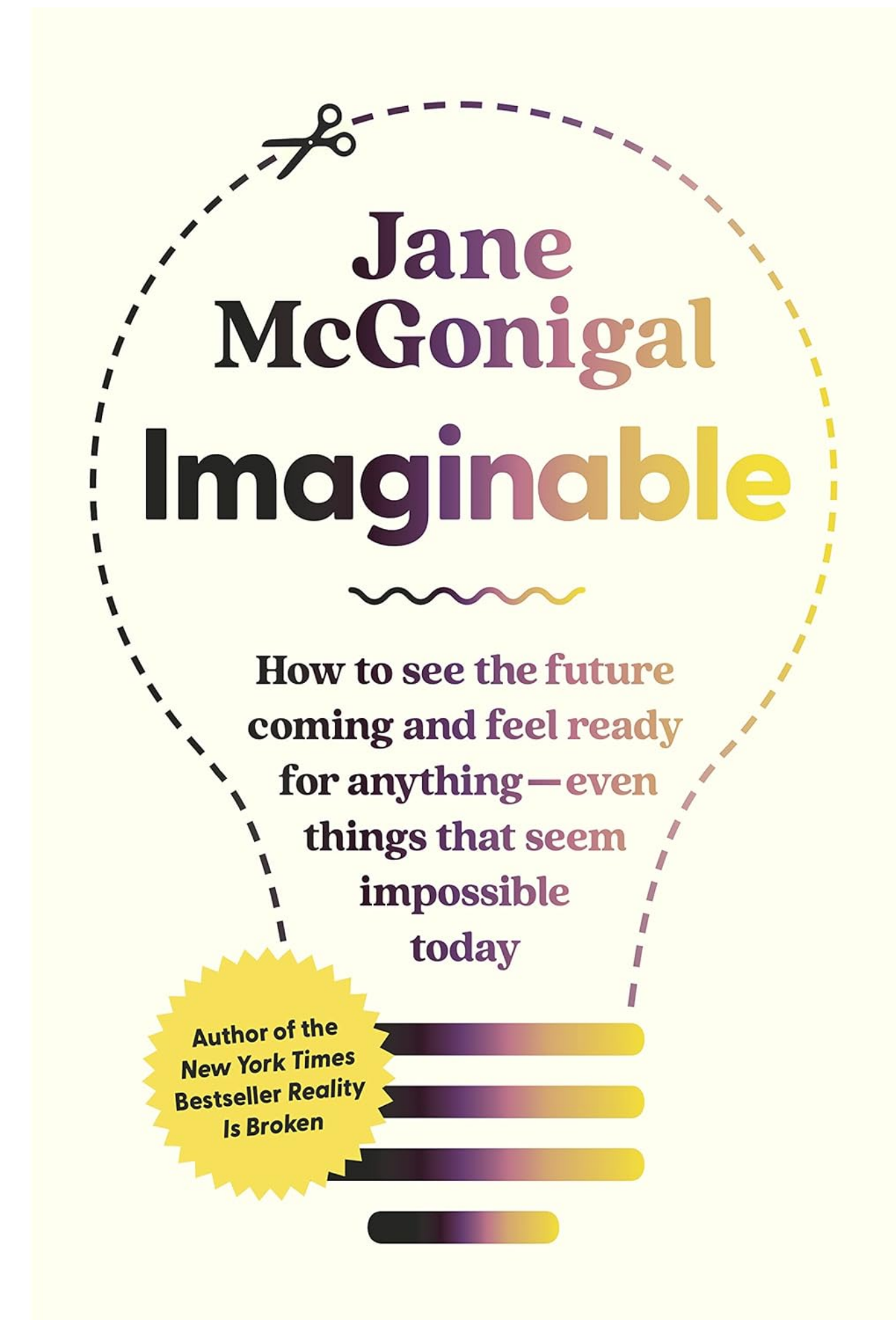


The Society for College and University Planning

“Futures thinking isn’t a superpower, and you don’t have to fix everything or save everyone.

But futures thinking is an **incredibly useful, practical tool** to prepare your mind to adapt faster to new challenges, build hope and resilience, reduce anxiety and depression, and inspire you to take actions today that set yourself up for future happiness and success.”

**Jane McGonigal, *Imaginable: How to see the future coming and feel ready for anything – even things that seem impossible today* (2022)**

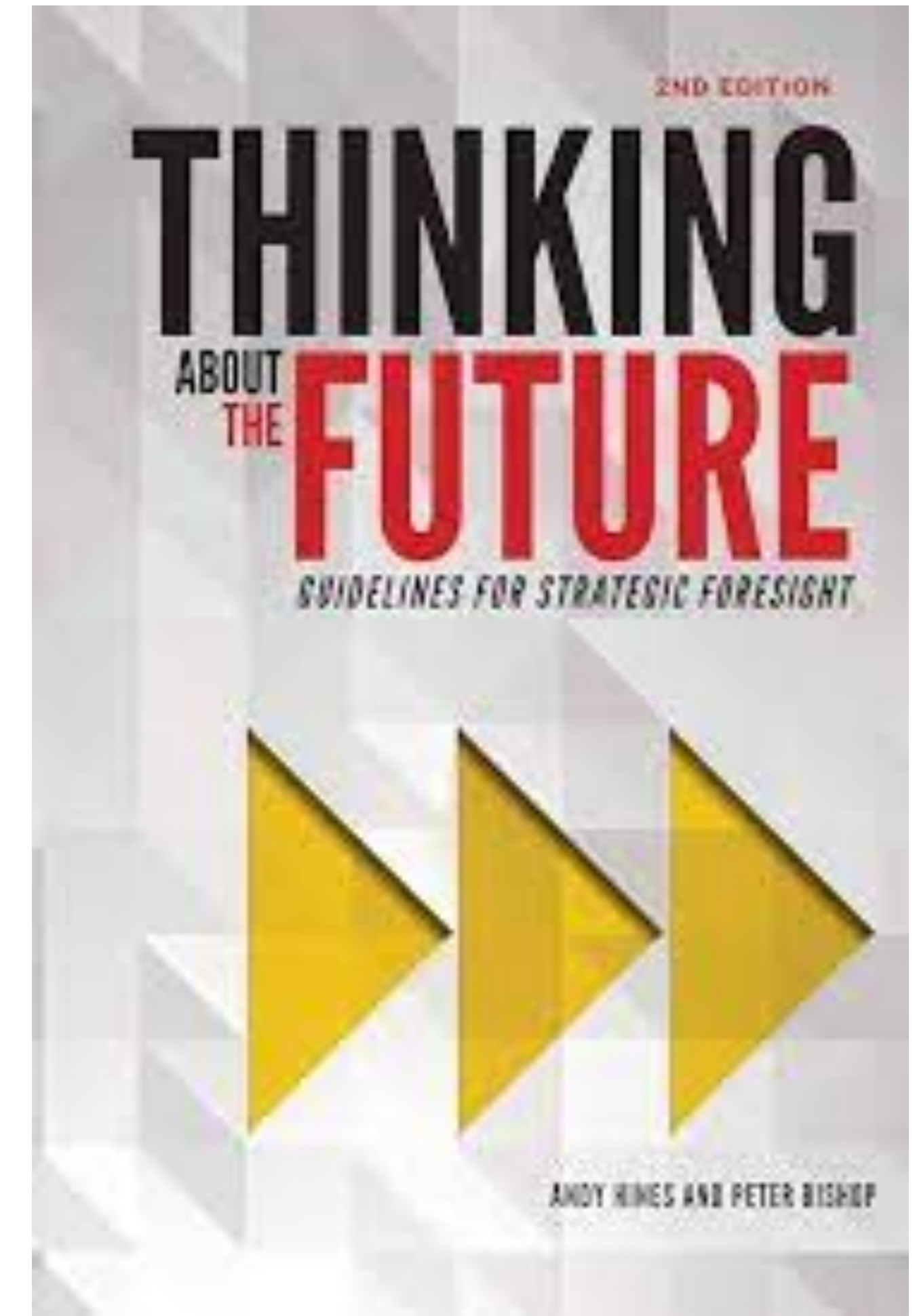


# 10 Principles for Strategic Foresight

## Copenhagen Institute for Futures Studies (CIFS)

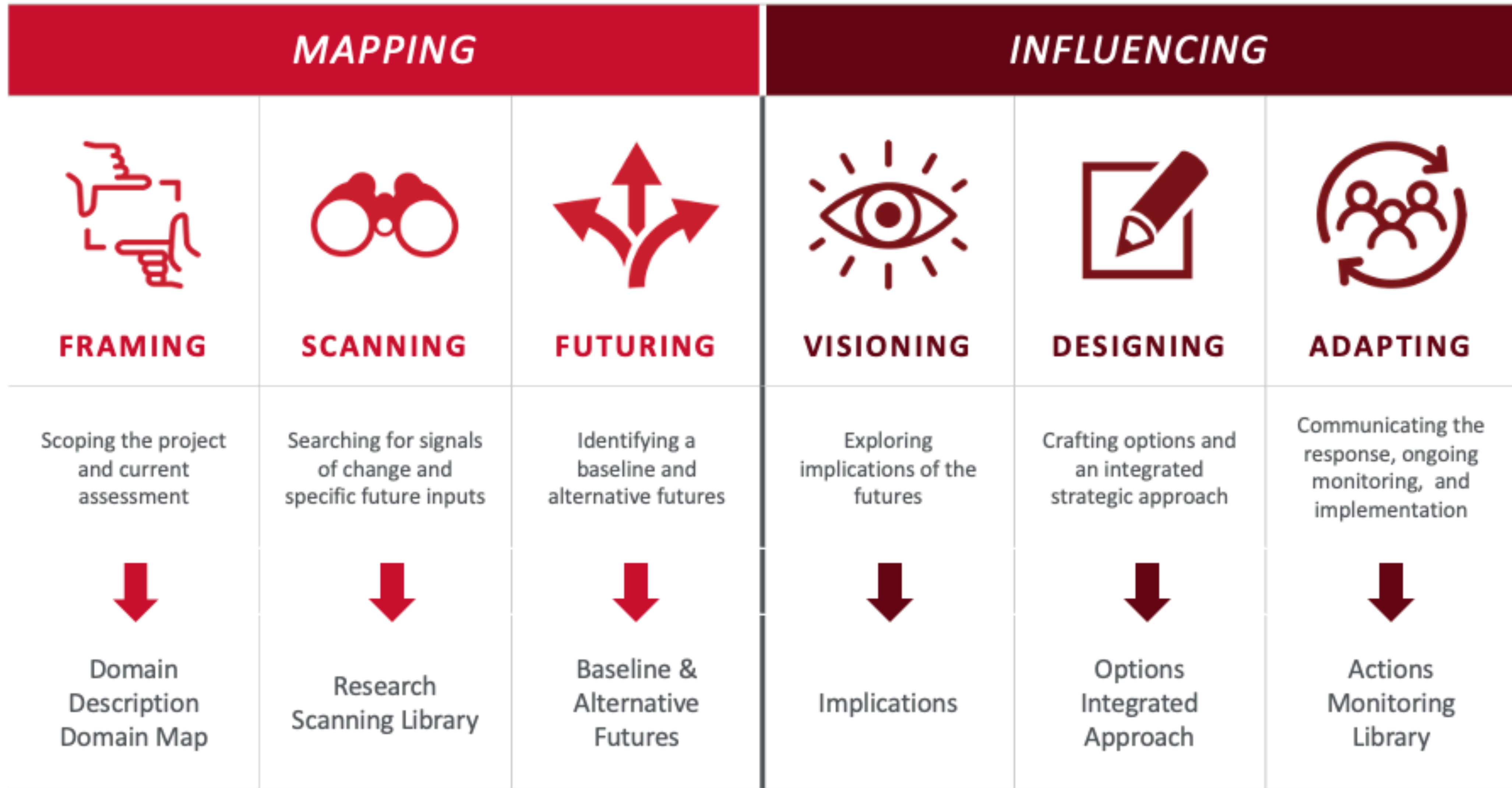
- Strategic foresight is a systems-thinking approach to support resilient organizational futures.
- Foresight and strategy are complementary parts of one process and in pursuit of future organizational success.
- Strategic foresight looks beyond the traditional strategic planning time horizon.
- Strategic foresight can be applied to a broad range of organizational contexts.
- Strategic foresight is not about making predictions of the future, but rather exploring plausible futures.
- The strategic foresight process is at least as important as the final outcomes.
- Strategic foresight focuses on exploring the future before considering implications for the present.
- Strategic foresight should be seen and approached as a form of collective intelligence.
- Strategic foresight seeks to challenge mental models and organizational perspectives.
- Applying strategic foresight in practice is not an academic exercise.

“Foresight is the study of change that uses a **systematic methodology** to explore the future in order to **make better decisions today** by helping us move us toward the futures we want and avoid those we don’t, and ultimately build confidence in the future by **building our capacity to avoid surprise!**”



**Andy Hines, Futurist, Founder of Hinesight  
Associate Professor and Program Coordinator at the University of Houston’s  
Graduate Program in Foresight**

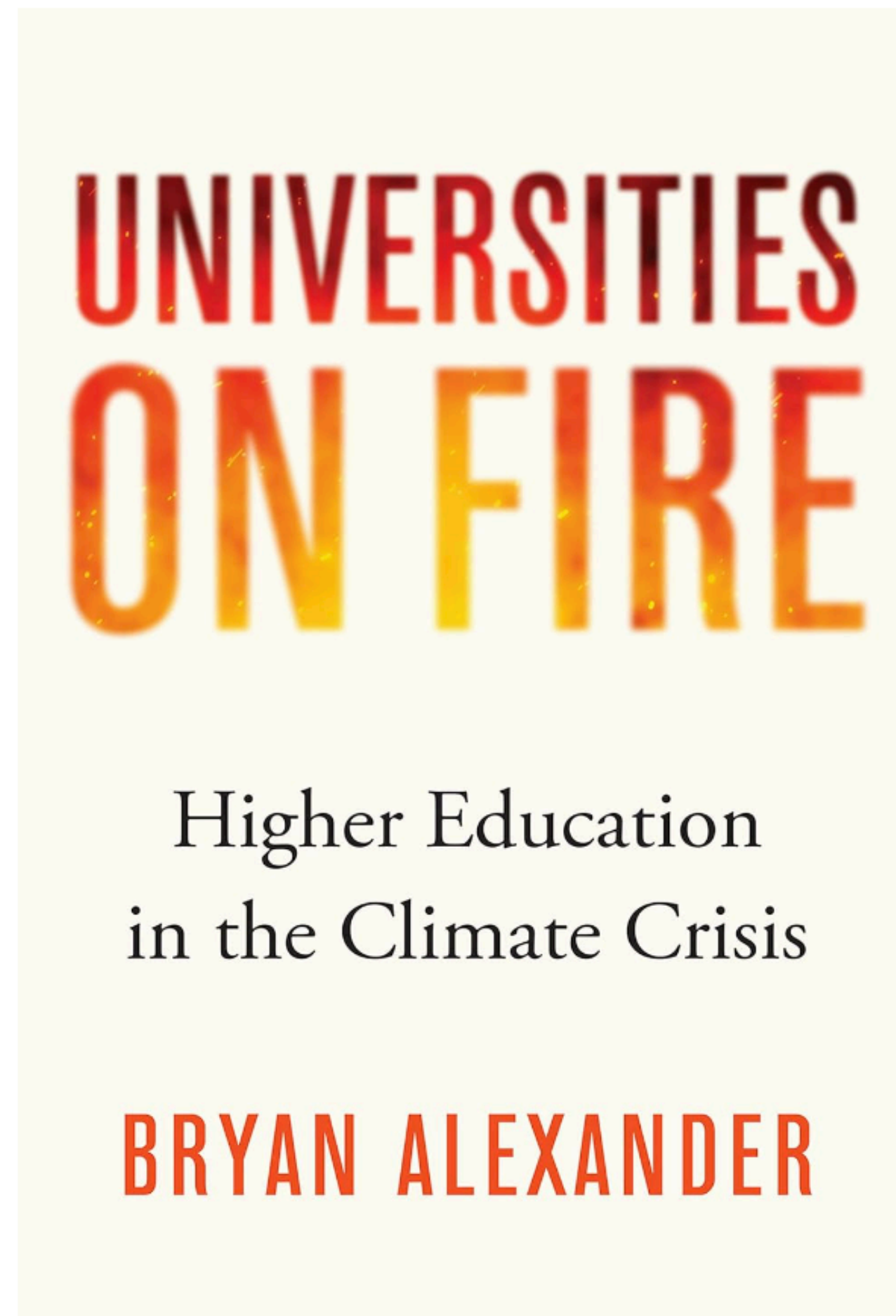
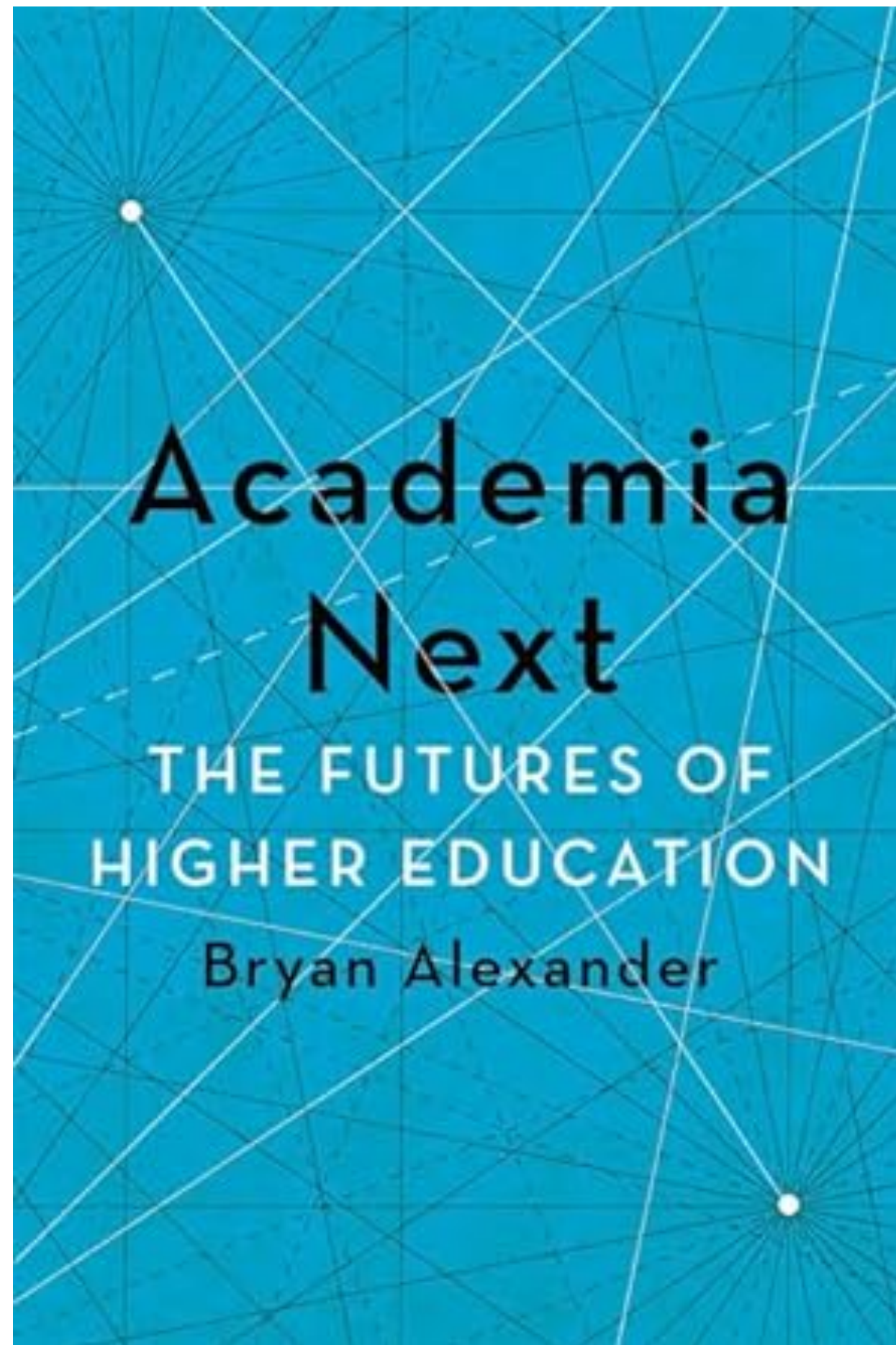




Source: A. Hines

# Foresight Work and Higher Ed

Many authors have applied these tools to map the plausible futures of learning, colleges, and universities.



# About Lisa's SCUP Fellowship Project

# Project Goals

Engaging those in and beyond the SCUP Community to use a foresight approach to map the futures of college and university planning in 2040

- To conduct a **broad environmental scan** of signals of change and trends likely to influence university planning in the next 20 years
- To use this research to develop **multiple scenarios**, brief narrative descriptions of possible futures
- To **actively involve current SCUP members and higher education professionals in the research** (to enhance the credibility of the findings and to learn from their experience participating in the project)

**Full Project Description:** <https://www.scup.org/bio/lisa-jasinski/>

# Participation Opportunities

Foresight is a form of collective intelligence. I need your voices.

JANUARY

26

## Emerging Leaders Conversation

An interactive discussion with SCUP's Emerging Leaders to identify [trends and factors](#) that may influence the future of university planning in the next two decades and beyond.

FEBRUARY

23

## SCUP Community Conversation 1

A participatory webinar with SCUP members to examine emerging trends and [future scenarios](#).

Members gauge their preparedness for plausible futures and identify steps they can take today to prepare for these plausible futures.

Virtual Session: 1 - 2 pm EST

MARCH

8

## SCUP Community Conversation 2

A participatory webinar with SCUP members to examine emerging trends and [future scenarios](#).

Members gauge their preparedness for plausible futures and identify steps they can take today to prepare for these plausible futures.

Virtual Session: 1 - 2 pm EST

JULY

21-23

## SCUP Annual Meeting

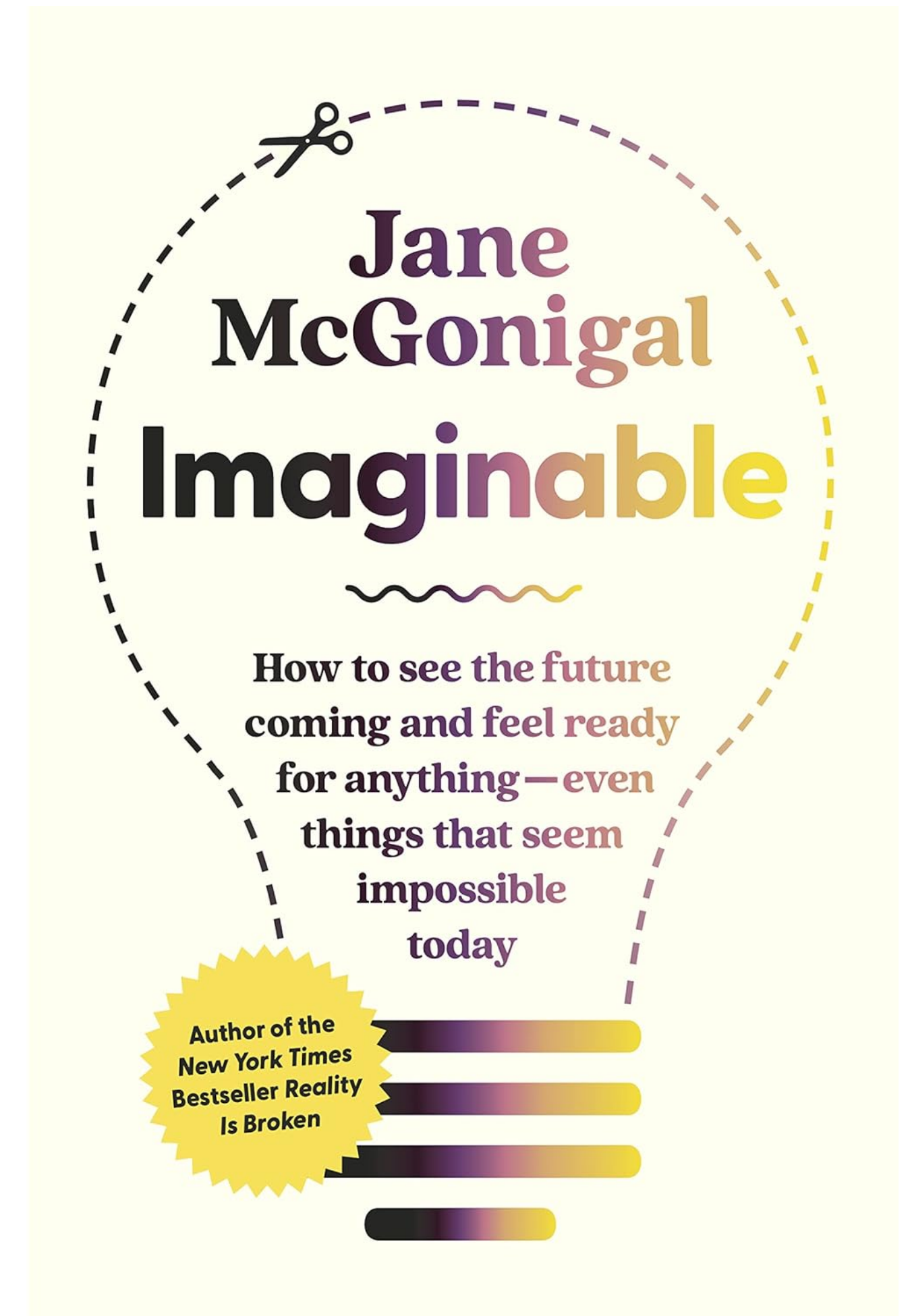
Lisa will share the [findings](#) of the project at the SCUP Annual Meeting in Philadelphia, PA.

Come learn about how your collective feedback informs how planning professionals plan for an unknown future.

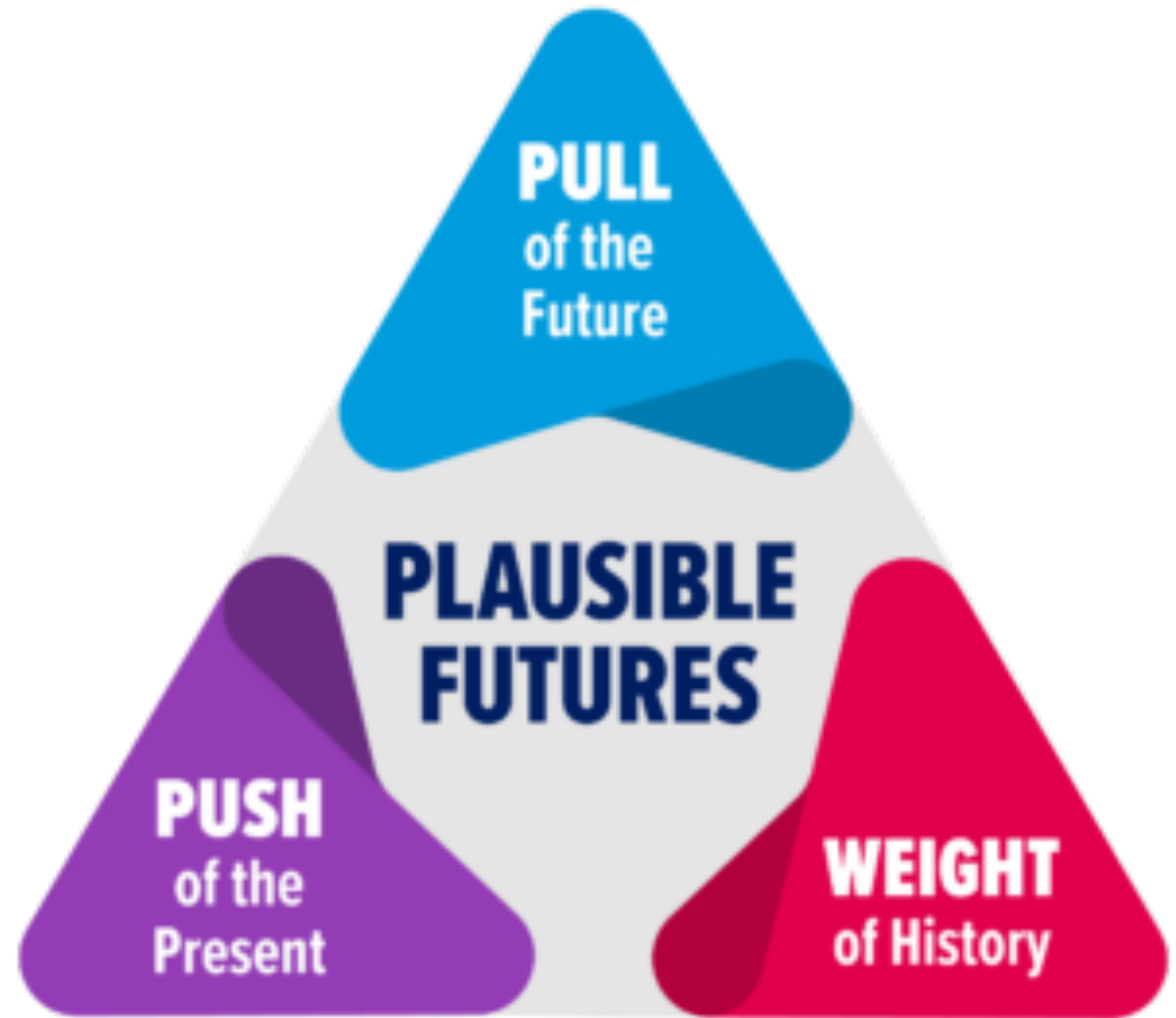
Futuring Together

“There are no facts about the future. Only questions.”

Jane McGonigal, *Imaginable: How to see the future coming and feel ready for anything – even things that seem impossible today* (2022)



# Identifying the **Drivers of Change** that May Impact Our Work as Planners and Leaders





# Identifying Signals of Change

## What can we infer about the future from the present?

- **Broad Changes: STEEP (Increased Competition for Resources\*)**
  - **Social** | Decline of Legacy News Media; Declining Life Expectancy; Values Divide: Hillbilly Elegy vs. Coastal Elites
  - **Technology** | Wrestling with the Uncertainty Around A.I.; Half of All Jobs Could be Vulnerable to Automation; A Shrinking Global Digital Divide
  - **Environment** | 2023 was the Hottest Year Ever; Climate Risks Are Everywhere (and varied); 22% of U.S. Energy is From Renewables and Increasing; Warming World Leads to Adverse Health Effects
  - **Economic** | Poor are Getting Poorer; Skilled Workers Have Demands in a Tight Labor Market; Geopolitical Uncertainty
  - **Politics** | Rising Perceptions of Partisan Polarization; Dysfunctional and Unproductive Congress, A Rising Activist Generation; Global Rise of Far Right/Nationalism

# Identifying Signals of Change

What can we infer about the future from the present?

- **Higher Education Trends External**
  - **Enrollment Declines & Demographic Shifts\*** | Changing Student Demographics; Between 2025-29, College-going Cohort will Shrink by 650,000 Students; Profound Regional Differences
  - **Declining Public Confidence** | Only 36% of Americans have Confidence in Higher Ed
  - **Impact of State Legislatures** | State Governments Spent Less on Higher Ed in 2022 than they Did in 2008; 8 States Have Passed Anti-DEI Laws; 30+ States Have Promise Programs Free/Nearly Free College

# Identifying Signals of Change

What can we infer about the future from the present?

- Higher Education Trends **Internal**
  - **Campus Leadership Instability** | College presidents serving fewer than 6 years in their roles and 55% plan to leave within 5 years
  - **Post Post-Pandemic** | Rethinking Finances, Learning, Operations, and Support
  - **Bottom-Line Matters** | Program and Personnel Cuts, 75% of Classroom Instructors are Non-Tenure-Track; Mergers and 15 Colleges Closed in 2023
  - **Inert U\*** | Despite being liberal bastions, universities are slow to adapt and change-resistant ([link](#))
  - **From Knowing to Doing** | Growing Emphasis on Professional Preparation Across Post-Secondary Institutions

# Inhabit this Future With Me

## Futurists Identify Scenarios of Plausible Futures Using Archetypes

### Growth

*Current trends and conditions, both good and bad, continue to grow as they have in the past, but at a faster rate.*

### Constraint

*A story of accepting new limits. We collectively respond to a threat or problem by agreeing to new restrictions or kinds of self-discipline.*

### Collapse

*A story of a sudden shutdown or tragic failure. When something we take for granted or an essential utility essentially disappears overnight.*

### Transformation\*

*A story of a world-changing innovation or breakthrough. It stretches our imagination, challenging our assumptions and suggesting what we once thought impossible can now be realized.*

Not since the Morrill Land Grant Act or the G.I. Bill has the federal government introduced such landmark educational legislation as the \$1T Congress has allocated for the **Garbarino-Houlahan Climate New Frontiers Grant**.

This landmark legislation will address some of our nation's most persistent challenges...

- Providing a skilled **workforce** to address vital needs
- To provide a **free college option** to all Americans
- To spark **innovation, achieve efficiencies** of scale, and reduce the surplus of universities in the U.S.
- Regaining **American Supremacy** from Global Rivals



Stacey Abrams, 51st  
President of the United States

Not since the Morrill Land Grant Act or the G.I. Bill has the federal government introduced such landmark legislation as the \$1T Congress has allocated for the Garbarino-Houlahan **Climate New Frontiers Grant**.

- To qualify for a **\$5B grant**, 8 postsecondary institutions must agree to merge into a new, single institution. *Mergers that include a minority-serving institution earn an additional \$1B in support.*
- The new institution may use its existing resources and grant aid to **provide targeted job (re)training and degree programs** to address our critical climate-related needs.
- Students qualify for a federal subsidy to attend merged institutions for **no cost**, provided they work in a designated climate frontiers profession for 10 years.



Stacey Abrams, 51st  
President of the United States

Students who complete an approved certificate or degree at a **Climate Frontiers University** and work for 10 years in their chosen profession qualify for full post-secondary educational cost forgiveness:

<p><b>Stemming the Future Effects of Climate Change</b></p> <p>Renewable Energies; Climate Research; Carbon Capture Tech; Adaptive Engineering; Entrepreneurship &amp; Innovation; Job Re-Training and Up-Skilling; Green Manufacturing</p>	<p><b>Emergency Mitigation Response</b></p> <p>Firefighters; Flood and River Management; Resilient Construction; Disaster Response Corps; Mass Evacuation Experts; FEMA; Local Government Coordination; Civil Engineers</p>
<p><b>Healing Our Lands and Our People</b></p> <p>Farmers and Animal Management; Land Conservation; Heat Sickness Specialists; Climate Educators; Biotech; Forestry; Habitat Rehabilitation Specialist; Rural Health Practitioners; Environmental Justice Advocates</p>	<p><b>Global Health and Security</b></p> <p>Global Public Health; Border Security; Migrant Control; Global Climate Responsiveness Corps; Nutritionist; Disinformation Detection &amp; Erradication</p>



Stacey Abrams, 51st President of the United States

# Inhabit this Future With Me

## Exploring Different Dimensions of this Future Together

For the purposes of this thought-experiment, be yourself in 2050.

How old will you be? Where will you be living? Where are you working (if you are working at all)?

Imagine yourself in your current region, at your current job, and in your current higher ed sector (e.g., a staffer at 4-year public research university in the Southern U.S.; an architect specializing in libraries at small private colleges in rural settings)

Don't think about how some hypothetical person would answer. **Just be you.**

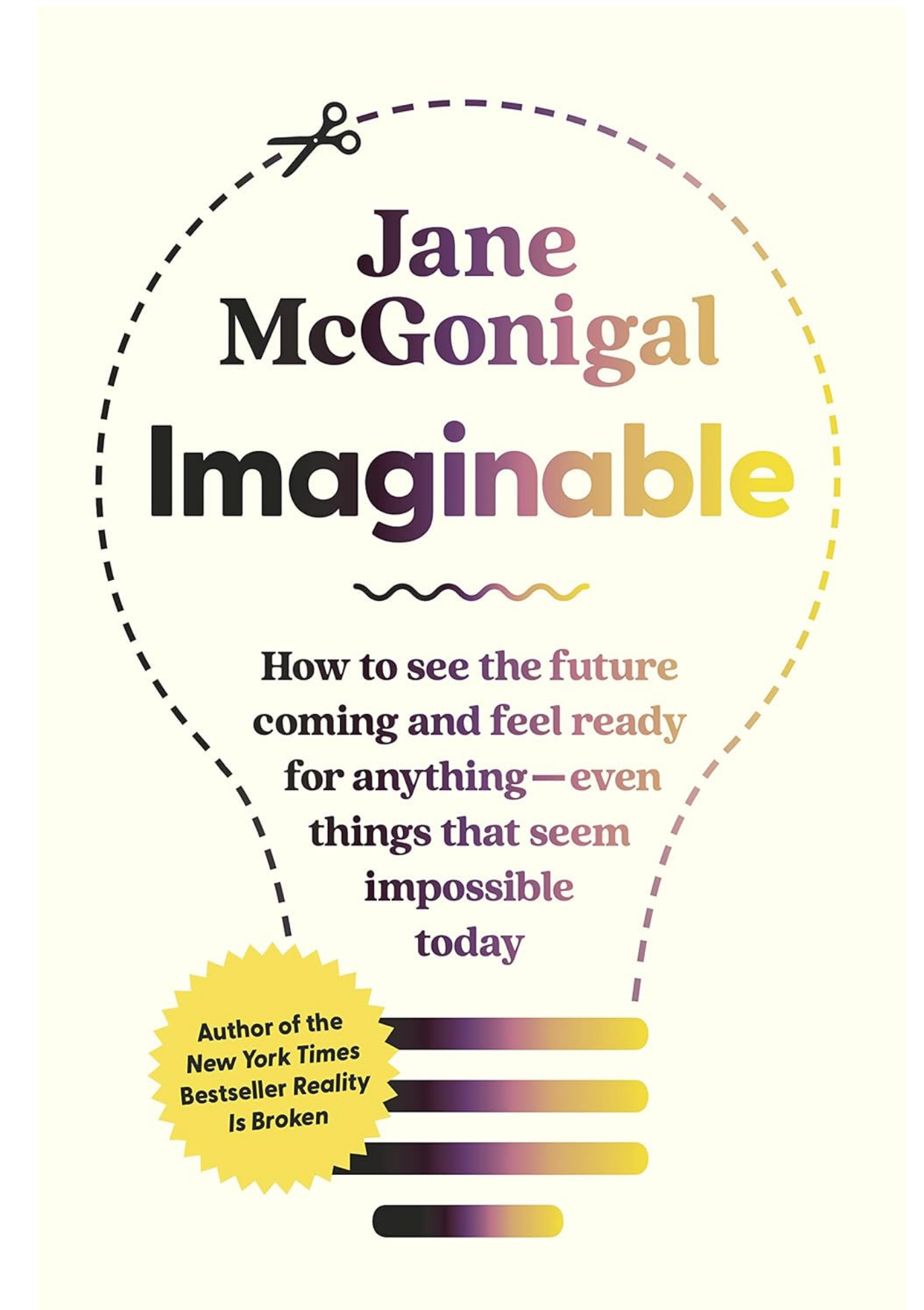


# Closure

# Becoming a Future-Ready Citizen

“This mental habit, of always challenging what you believe could or could not be different, and actively looking for evidence that **literally anything could change**—even something that has been true for all evolutionary history—gives you a powerful foundation for spotting any kind of change faster, so you can **adapt faster** and **prepare to help others** more effectively.”

**Jane McGonigal, *Imaginable: How to see the future coming and feel ready for anything— even things that seem impossible today* (2022)**

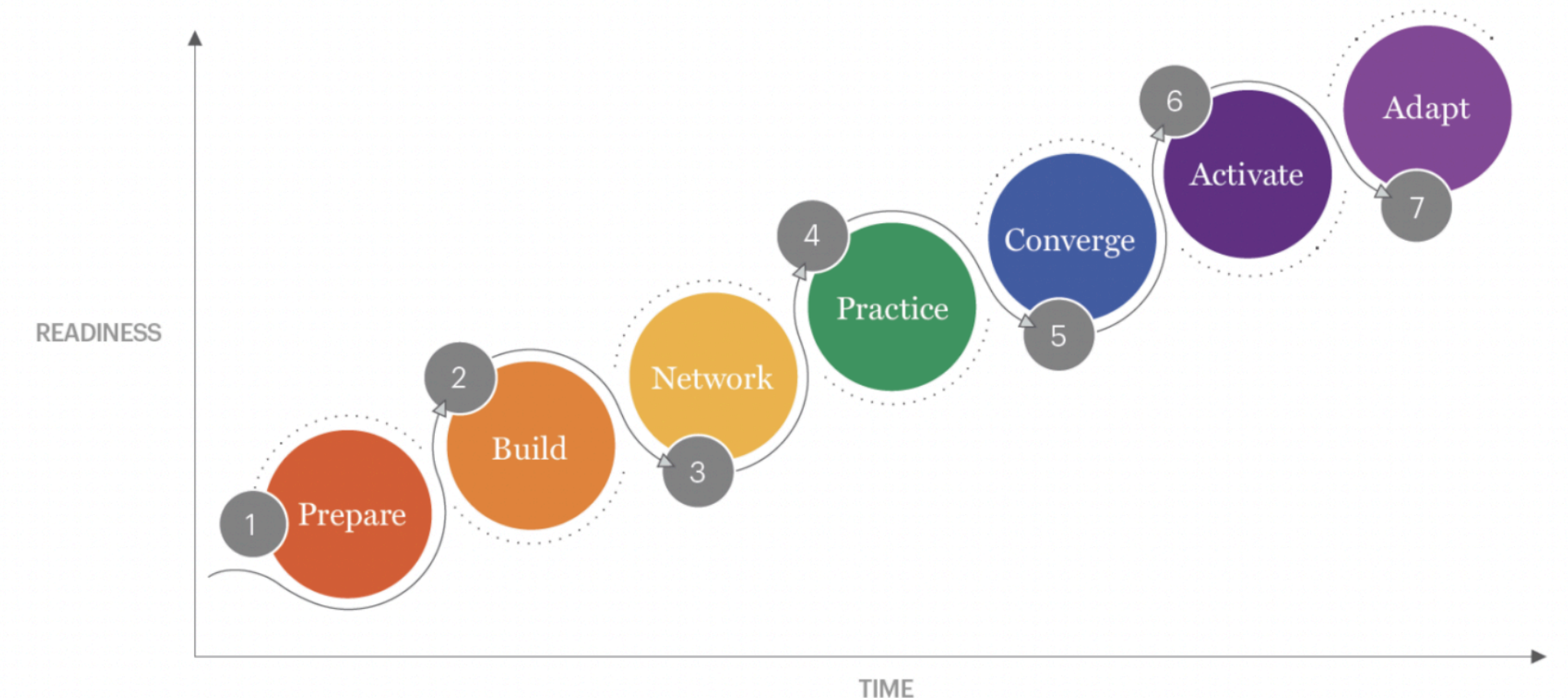


# Becoming a Future-Ready Organization

## Steps we take as universities and organizations

“Future-ready organizations avoid being blindsided by change and are better able to transform valuable foresight into actionable insight by **building and maintaining an anticipatory system** (a network of resources including people, processes, methods, and tools dedicated to scanning the emerging future).”

7 Steps Towards Becoming a Future-Ready Organization



# Becoming a Future-Ready Organization

## Steps we take as universities and organizations

Here are some examples:

- A social networking company **monitoring a steady stream of signals** that will impact or transform their current offerings
- A global food company **designing and scoping an internal foresight project** to build consumer insight on the future of snacking
- A philanthropic foundation **listening deeply to the populations they serve** to understand their frontline challenges
- A city's public transit planners **building scenarios** to transform public transportation and increase ridership
- A university **envisioning forms of higher education** that are more responsive to the challenges and opportunities ahead in the next decade.

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**Institute for the Future:** <https://www.iftf.org/insights/7-steps-toward-becoming-a-future-ready-organization/>

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