EDUCAUSE and the IT academic community value collaboration. Whether the goal is to increase knowledge, spur innovation, or accelerate learning, collaboration is an expectation among higher education IT leaders and practitioners.

Information technology plays a catalytic role in collaboration. With the Internet, everything and everyone is connected. It provides an architecture for participation and collaboration. The tools for information sharing and creation are widely distributed. Individuals are empowered with information. And the Internet changes traditional dynamics. For example, everyone has a voice. Although collaboration existed before the Internet, information technology is a powerful enabler.

Collaboration is as much about the process—sharing information and building on others’ contributions—as it is about a product. Coming together, learning from others, and contributing to the common good require a mindset, a toolset, and shared goals.

Thanks to information technology, collaboration is manifest in creation nets, where competitiveness is based on how fast you learn. Information technology and collaboration form the basis for crowd-sourcing, in which innovation and problem-solving come from the global community rather than an internal R&D unit. At a scale never before possible, collaboration is being harnessed to solve some of the most challenging problems of both higher education and society.

Collaboration applies to every level in the EDUCAUSE community. At the project level, collaboration is the hallmark of successful teamwork. At the campus level, the CIO collaborates with other leaders across the institution to ensure that the IT organization supports the mission of higher education. And at the state and national levels, institutions are collaborating to develop the next generation of tools, improve efficiency, and advance innovation.

IT organizations cannot afford not to collaborate to provide the greatest value to their stakeholders. Information technology is threaded throughout the institution, providing IT leaders with a unique collaborative role: they can bring together people, ideas, and technologies.

EDUCAUSE embraces the values of collaboration, the common good, innovation, and openness. Collaboration is central to the EDUCAUSE mission and that of our community.