I can't stress enough that I am talking about a strategic plan—a gathering of energy—and not a pause. After all, there is a considerable amount of work already under way. Long before the doors opened for our 2015 conference in Indianapolis, for example, we were already hard at work planning for our 2016 annual conference in Anaheim. While we complete a detailed membership survey, conduct focus groups, and seek input in other ways from members as part of our strategic-planning process, we will continue to deliver on our work in progress, including improvements that you may have already noticed (the redesigned EDUCAUSE Review website: http://er.educause.edu/) and significant work that many will never directly notice (replacing the EDUCAUSE ERP system). In addition, we will soon be launching (1) the EDUCAUSE Benchmarking Service beta project featuring maturity and deployment indices (http://www.educause.edu/benchmarking) and (2) the Leading Academic Transformation program (http://www.educause.edu/LAT). At the same time we will be offering a new Management Bootcamp at Connect-Denver and Connect-Miami and a new CISO Leadership Seminar at SEC16 and will be expanding our professional development opportunities in other ways as well.

Finally, we are convening a new presidential advisory committee, which we are calling the EDUCAUSE Young Professionals Advisory Council until the group selects its own name. The council will create new EDUCAUSE leadership opportunities and help ensure that we are listening to emerging, as well as seasoned, voices in our community.

You will be seeing some of our efforts to strengthen connections within the higher education IT community in this very issue of EDUCAUSE Review, which features our inaugural column focused on community colleges. In Connections: Community College Insights, we will shine a light on the important two-year college landscape, with as much interest in pointing out differentiating value as in identifying points of commonality and shared interest among EDUCAUSE member institutions.

All institutions, not just community colleges, are today considering their points of commonality as well as their differential value. This duality is the primary theme of the 2016 Top 10 IT Issues. As detailed in this issue of EDUCAUSE Review, 2016’s top issues reflect the ways in which higher education institutions are learning to use information technology more strategically in those areas where commonalities can be leveraged to differentiate themselves from other institutions in the way they enhance teaching and learning and improve student success. Part of the work IT organizations are undertaking involves divesting themselves of locally optimized and delivered services and processes to move instead...
to common standards, applications, and services. **Reinvestments** are needed as well, to adapt the IT workforce and organization to support new service models like cloud computing and IT service management and **differentiating** capabilities like analytics and e-learning. Cloud computing is also requiring IT leaders to consider reinvesting in IT funding models to accommodate a major rebalancing of capital and operating funds. In this way, the three themes for the 2016 Top 10 IT Issues summarize the IT challenges and IT opportunities for higher education: divest, reinvest, and differentiate.

One key challenge is, sadly, always animated and never suspended. The #1 IT Issue this year is **Information Security**, which feels much more like the steep drop of the roller coaster. IT organizations are struggling to maintain some semblance of control on the wild ride of managing new threats and bringing our institutions safely through breaches that seem to have become inevitable.

The lasting value of the EDUCAUSE annual Top 10 IT Issues list is not the list itself but, rather, the conversations it engenders. As we know from years past, the conversations will continue through the 50-plus face-to-face and virtual EDUCAUSE events each year. Using the annual Top 10 IT Issues list allows us a moment to take it all in—to pause amid the tremendous activity where higher education and information technology meet. When we know the biggest opportunities and the biggest challenges, we can navigate the future more effectively, and we can gather our energy in a thoughtful, productive way.

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