The EDUCAUSE Awards Program, under the guidance of the EDUCAUSE Recognition Committee, brings peer endorsement and distinction to professional accomplishments in higher education information technology.

The Leadership Award is the association’s highest recognition and honors exemplary leaders whose work has had significant positive impact on advancing the theory and practice of information technology in higher education.

The Community Leadership Award recognizes members for their roles as community leaders and active volunteers in professional service to the broader higher education IT community.

The Rising Star Award spotlights rising higher education IT leaders whose records reflect ongoing and exceptional growth in contribution to the profession and increased levels of leadership and responsibility.
EDUCUSE posthumously bestows a 2016 Leadership Award on William H. (Bill) Graves, who has left an indelible mark on the higher education community in his career of more than forty years. Bill passed away in April 2016 after a courageous battle with brain cancer.

For thirty years, Bill served the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC): as a math professor, dean for general education, interim vice chancellor for academic affairs, senior IT officer, and founder/director of the Institute for Academic Technology. The IAT, a partnership between the university and IBM, led to the development of groundbreaking software for supporting courses using the Internet. Always ahead of his time in understanding the potential of technology to transform education, Bill directed his team at UNC to the forefront in leading the higher education sector into the ubiquitous adoption of learning management system software.

While on leave from the university in 1997, he founded and directed the nonprofit Collegis Research Institute and, after retiring in 1999 from UNC, founded and chaired the board of Eduprise. In these positions and later at SunGard Higher Education and Ellucian (a series of evolving corporate entities linked through acquisition), Bill successfully bridged his faculty/administrative role with executive positions in major technology corporations and helped to pioneer technology-enabled strategies for measurably improving on and accounting for institutional and academic performance in postsecondary education. At the time of his retirement in 2014, Bill was senior vice president for academic strategy at Ellucian.

Bill was a prolific writer and speaker on the connections between learners and technology, on the potential of technology to help meet institutional and societal goals, on the importance of evolving models and partnerships among educational stakeholders, and on the issues of access, retention, affordability, and educational justice. He explored these themes in more than eighty published articles and books (he was a generous contributor to EDUCUSE Review) and in his blog, The Learning Cloud.

Throughout his career, Bill was a driving force in creating several organizations that continue to influence the higher education community. Bill served on the boards for CAUSE, EDUCUSE, and the Coalition for Networked Information (CNI). He played a key leadership role in launching Internet2, the IMS Global Learning Consortium, and Educom’s National Learning Infrastructure Initiative (later to become the EDUCUSE Learning Initiative).
Additionally, Bill served on governing or advisory organizations for Antioch University, UNC-Chapel Hill School of Information and Library Science, the National Center for Academic Transformation, the U.S. Department of Education's Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education, and the International Association of University Presidents.

Bill's foresight and leadership shaped the world of higher education, and the products and services he invented or helped develop have had a lasting impact on teaching, learning, and communicating. Overall, his pioneering spirit and his dedication to the greater good—and his ability to combine the two—were what made Bill an outstanding leader for EDUCAUSE and the higher education IT community.

“I seriously doubt there is anyone in the field of technology and higher education who does not owe a direct debt of gratitude to Bill. His extensive writings and presentations cut a wide swath, from highly technical papers to connecting H. G. Wells's view of education as running a race for educational justice and attainment. Overall, Bill's work addressed interfaces:

- **The interface between the learner and technology.** Throughout his career, Bill focused a great deal on how the learner's experience can be enhanced with the proper access to and use of technology. He did not view technology as an end in itself but as a tool that is useful to learning. This view also underlies the software he co-developed.

- **The interface between learning technology and policy.** Bill was one of the few people who could articulate the need to provide the infrastructure for enhancing learning and the strategic policy directions that postsecondary institutions must take to maximize both their investment and the learning outcomes. The ease with which he navigated between the academic and the corporate worlds made a very difficult translational conversation happen in ways and settings that would be nearly impossible otherwise, permitting the interweaving of strategic directions in each.

- **The interface between technology and global access to education.** One of Bill's deeply personal values was the need for equal access for all to quality education. Bill saw technology as a way to achieve that. His writings over the past several decades presaged the current discussions and debates regarding access to, retention in, and completion of postsecondary education by individuals who come from financially challenging backgrounds. He argued passionately that governments and institutions must create new, different forms of collaborations with public and private organizations to deliver content in ways that facilitate learning.

I never encountered a person who was more generous with his time or more patient with someone who was far less knowledgeable than he. Bill was a superb mentor, willing to spend as much time as needed, at any time, in any place that made learning and thinking easier. He always devoted far more time and energy to his work and mentoring than anyone ever expected of him. His humility meant that he did not seek or take credit for his own impact. That's so refreshing in this age of Instagram and Twitter. I know my career has been much richer and fulfilling because of his mentorship over more than 20 years.”

—John C. Cavanaugh
President and CEO, Consortium of Universities of the Washington Metropolitan Area

“Bill's leadership in online learning has profoundly influenced the field over the past 25+ years. His ability to bridge the gulf between the quality academic outcomes we all seek and the underlying technology, while applying sound business principles, was his trademark. His conviction that online learning would reach its potential only by being based on realistic financial goals and sound management has been borne out time and again by the successes and failures of the field. And Bill's ability to speak to all the diverse contributors to online program success, in their own terms and frames of reference, was unique.”

—Ron Legon
former Executive Director, Quality Matters, and former Provost, University of Baltimore
Bill was one of the early adopters of technology. Originally a mathematics professor at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, he became known across the country as a spokesperson for the transformative power of information technology. Starting in the 1990s, Bill spoke at hundreds of campuses creating awareness and enthusiasm for information technology. Of course, Bill continued in the profession, with many more accomplishments and positions. But no matter what his role, Bill continued to advocate for the many ways technology can enhance higher education. He never ceased writing and thinking about technology innovations.

On a personal note I will be forever grateful to Bill for helping me develop an understanding of information technology and for modeling how to be an effective advocate of its power.

—Diana Oblinger
President Emeritus, EDUCAUSE

Bill's work could potentially be summarized along three key concepts. The first is the importance of understanding and effectively implementing the role of higher education leadership in reaching national and global goals for knowledge development and credentialing. One of the reasons Bill was such a sought-after speaker and adviser was his ability to connect institutional mission objectives with larger societal goals, resulting in great respect from a wide variety of university and college presidents and chancellors.

The second key concept is the importance of the potential role of technology in improving the ability to meet national, global, and institutional goals. Bill was never an advocate of technology for its own sake. Instead, he focused on the ability of technology to enable high-touch interaction and services to improve the educational experience and graduation rates. In both academic and industry settings, he helped institutions realize excellent return on their investments in technology.

The third key concept is the importance of partnerships. To meet the societal goals for education, the academy must be willing to consider and adopt more efficient and effective models. Bill was constantly seeking new forms of partnerships among a diverse ecosystem of public and private educational stakeholders to consider how to evolve practice on a broad scale.

Finally, Bill's devotion to leadership was accomplished in a tireless and selfless manner. Among those he worked with, Bill was known as being totally dedicated to the cause. His devotion to these ideas was 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Furthermore, he was noteworthy in that his interest in self-promotion or even career advancement appeared to be minimal. Bill was genuinely interested in advancing these causes in a selfless manner.

—Rob Abel
CEO, IMS Global Learning Consortium

Bill was truly a pioneer, a renaissance man interested in everything. He was ahead of his time in understanding and communicating about how technology transformed education. Bill was a gentle, but persistent colleague who facilitated a collaborative environment like no one else—where people really listened and learned from one another. He inspired so many, and his insights about how institutions could enable technology to further their missions made him a true innovator. His contributions to our industry, and his zest for life and learning, will be forever remembered.

—Dave Lambert
President and CEO, Internet2
EDUCAUSE recognizes Donald Z. Spicer, associate vice chancellor for information technology and CIO for the University System of Maryland (USM), for his dedication throughout his career to shaping and developing model initiatives that work across institutional categories and boundaries in support of the educational mission.

At USM, Don has been responsible for developing a shared IT vision for a system that is a representative cross-section of U.S. public higher education. The system includes twelve institutions with diverse missions. In addition to his IT role, he has led a number of system initiatives promoting academic transformation, advancing an understanding of the impact of disruption, and improving effectiveness and efficiency.

Donald Z. Spicer
— For extraordinary leadership, effectiveness, and statesmanship; for visionary promotion of information technology at institutional, system-wide, and organizational levels; for fostering collaborative efforts to develop a thriving environment of IT services and support; for research that advanced the thinking around strategic issues in higher education.
A common thread running throughout Don's career is his ability to bring people together in a spirit of vision, trust, and collegiality to achieve successful multi-institutional collaborations. During his eighteen-year career at USM, Don has mobilized efforts for several major initiatives, including the creation of the Maryland Education Enterprise Consortium (MEEC), which establishes contracts for hardware, software, and services for the state's entire K-20 community: public, private, and federal. He also helped establish the Maryland Research and Education Network (MDREN) and Collaborative Solutions Maryland (CSM), both of which support the collective network-related needs of K-20 education across the state. Don also led the effort for system-wide membership for USM in Internet2. In recent years, he has worked to support the collaborative activities of USMAI (University System of Maryland and Affiliated Institutions), the state's four-year library consortium of academic institutions.

Don began his career as a faculty member in mathematics. At Vassar College, where he transitioned into an academic administrative position, he worked closely with Educom, jointly receiving a FIPSE (Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education) grant that allowed the college to expand its academic computing technologies and become a model for the use of technology at liberal arts colleges. Later, at the University of Notre Dame, he led efforts to support the innovative use of technology in teaching and learning and was instrumental in broadly defining the role of technology at the university.

Don has always been active professionally in major national technology initiatives. While at Vanderbilt University, he was part of the CIO group that formed Internet2 and also lent support to the creation of Southern Crossroads (SoX), the regional Internet2 GigaPOP. Also at Vanderbilt, he worked closely with the Sloan Foundation to initiate online learning and helped establish the asynchronous learning network (ALN). In 1996 he joined the editorial board of the Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks and served as one of the journal's associate editors from 2011 to 2015. He currently is the co-editor of a new journal, Journal of Innovations in Online Education.

Don's many contributions to EDUCAUSE and its predecessors date back to 1991. In addition to serving as a regional conference chair, committee member, speaker, moderator, and mentor on countless occasions, he was an ECAR (EDUCAUSE Center for Analysis and Research) Fellow from 2003 to 2013, during which time he authored publications and bulletins that advanced research on issues of significance to IT leaders and the higher education community.

Throughout his career, Don has distinguished himself as a leader with a deep understanding of the foundational importance of technology to the educational enterprise. He brings to any endeavor his skills in cultivating relationships, cooperation, and a sense of shared purpose in serving the greater good.

**EDUCAUSE Review:** When you think about your career, what lessons learned would you pass along to those starting out in this field? What is required for effective leadership? Have those requirements changed?

**Spicer:** I became a CIO as my second career in higher education. Like many of my peers, I came from the functional side, as opposed to what was then the “data-processing” side of the field. Thus, I have always considered myself to be primarily an educator rather than an IT professional. Understanding that, one has to know one's limitations and depend on a strong professional technical staff. In large organizations, a strategic, mission-related view is important for the CIO. The goal is to align with the activities of the organization, not necessarily to follow the latest technological trends.

The biggest surprise to me as I progressed in this career was that the most important skill set for the job was related to people. Within the IT organization are many heads-down professionals very focused on the nitty-gritty, as is necessary. On the organizational side, a large number of individuals want technology to support their activities and aren't concerned with the details. The CIO has to understand—and be a bridge between—both populations.

Increasingly, within large IT organizations, CIOs lead the “softer” side while CTOs lead the technical side. Newcomers to technology leadership should assess their interests and skills and pick a path.

**EDUCAUSE Review:** Do you have advice for emerging leaders? Anything that you wish you had known before?

**Spicer:** When I entered the field, it was young and immature. Coming from the faculty was a reasonable starting point. Several decades later, higher education IT leadership is a recognized professional path. One of the things I lacked, from which an emerging leader would benefit, is a mentor. Although I formed relationships with wise colleagues, a more formal arrangement would have benefited me. In fact, one of the proudest aspects of my career is the number of higher education CIOs...
who previously served on my staff; they created their careers, but I hope I played a role.

In addition, I believe that higher education really is different from other enterprises. IT leadership in any context involves a lot of ambiguity, but higher education tops the list in that regard. There are many stakeholders, often with conflicting agendas and power. Unlike business, where there is a clear bottom line, educational institutions have varied priorities, and sometimes metrics are unclear. Governance is an important tool, but it goes only so far. Higher education experience is therefore critical to leadership success.

Another observation is that higher education CIOs move around a lot. Neither I nor my family understood this when I made a career change. I’ve been extremely fortunate in the institutions with which I have been associated, but that was a matter of luck and circumstances as much as anything else. If one aspires for stability, being a CIO may not be the right professional goal.

EDUCAUSE Review: How important is it to partner strategically across the academy, and how do you advise leaders do that?

Spicer: My CIO professional career has gone from campus IT leadership to university system leadership. At the campus level, my job was to build bridges between the IT organization and the administration, between the IT organization and the academic community, and among diverse groups with common needs, such as high-performance computing where working together garners more results than working separately.

In my system role, facilitating strategic partnerships has become a major part of my job. At the University System of Maryland (USM), we have benefited greatly by thinking outside the box and reaching out to all educational segments in the state—K-12, two-year institutions, private colleges and universities, and other public institutions—to align in highly leveraged activities. In my area, these activities include procuring IT products and services, ensuring wide-area networking, sharing library resources, and promoting academic transformation. Along with colleagues in the USM Office, I also work to align public higher education with the needs of the state.

Location drives Maryland’s knowledge-based economy; the state’s relatively small size helps build personal relationships; and citizens’ expectations make higher education—public and private—important for the state. All of this contributes to building strategic partnerships that meet common objectives, not just proprietary ones.

EDUCAUSE Review: During your career, what kept you up at night?

Spicer: While many of the technology initiatives during my career have involved significant monetary investment, the technology is the easy part of the job. There are always implementation and support issues, but if one is fortunate enough to have good technical staff, these issues are manageable. Some situations allow a fair bit of discretion, but in others, every project has to be justified. One learns to live within the system.

What has kept me up at night are the people issues. Do we have the staff resources to meet expectations? How can we balance conflicting requests from a community that simply wants appropriate, working technology to do their jobs?

EDUCAUSE Review: What do you think will be keeping IT leaders up at night in the future? What are the key issues that will be influencing the profession and higher education overall?

Spicer: In recent years, an ongoing debate has centered on the CIO’s role as strategist and enabler of institutional change versus the CIO as tactician focusing on information technology. Higher education institutions have often taken the tactician view, but the pendulum keeps swinging. As a new generation of higher education leadership comes into place, I believe there will be more focus on the strategic role of the CIO. Higher education is undergoing much of the same disruption that other industries have experienced, though for an industry that is more than 800 years old, change does not occur easily or rapidly.

This should be exciting to future IT leaders. We are part of the problem—inciting disruption—as well as part of the solution. An IT leader needs to focus more on the “leader” than on the “IT,” but the job still requires understanding trends, knowing what is real and what is ephemeral, gaining credibility from all stakeholders—inside and outside of the IT organization—and being viewed as relevant to the evolution of the organization. This is a big list, and few will be able to excel at everything.

Finally, future IT leaders must recognize that higher education institutions do not typically distinguish themselves by the quality of their technology. Going forward, this will be increasingly the case as more operations are moved off campus. This doesn’t mean that CIOs and CTOs will become irrelevant. It means that their value to the institution will be in ensuring that campus and community members have the right technologies and services, no matter where those technologies and services are sourced.
EDUCAUSE recognizes Timothy Chester as an ongoing champion for information technology organizations and how they can inform and influence broader higher education strategy and policy. Tim is also an advocate for leadership strategy and organizational change, having elevated the CIO role to the VP level at both Pepperdine University and the University of Georgia (UGA). In his current position as vice president for information technology at UGA, Tim has focused on strategies to elevate the work of the IT and Institutional Research organizations and their influence and impact at the university. Since his arrival in 2011, he has revamped the institution’s central IT organization to ensure that its day-to-day work is

Timothy Chester
—For his exemplary and wide-ranging sphere of influence in the higher education IT profession; for extraordinary thought leadership in IT service assessment, management, and delivery; for mentorship and advancing professional development within the higher education community
We learn so much from sharing our ideas with others, allowing them to influence our ideas while we simultaneously influence theirs.”

process while also transforming the school’s IT operation into an effective service model encompassing strategic areas such as analytics, institutional research, and teaching and learning. The Pepperdine reorganization was recognized with a 2011 Campus Technology Innovator Award for Leadership, Governance, and Policy.

A hallmark of Tim’s career is his interest in studying the barriers limiting effective IT service delivery. For nearly a decade in his work as leader of the TechQual+ project (https://www.techqual.org/), Tim has advised others on how they can assess and improve IT services at their institutions. To date, more than 100 institutions have used the TechQual+ survey as a way to develop sound planning, continuous improvement, assessment practices, and organizational change. Tim has been the guiding force behind this innovative assessment tool.

Tim has also worked as an advocate for professional development and as a generous and insightful mentor to others. He has guided and supported EDUCAUSE professional development as a Program Committee member and presenter, and he is regarded as a thoughtful, provocative, and innovative speaker. As director of the Hawkins Leadership Roundtable, he has brought incredible energy and excitement to the program. He has written on a variety of subjects of interest to the community in numerous EDUCAUSE and ECAR publications and elsewhere. And he engages the larger higher education community by sharing his perspective on Twitter and on his EDUCAUSE and personal blogs under his trademark handle “accidentalCIO.”

Tim’s outstanding qualities as a thought leader, innovator, role model, and mentor have strengthened the entire higher education community.

**EDUCAUSE Review:** What can you tell us about the Higher Education TechQual+ Project and its benefits for the higher education community?

Chester: This project has kept my work as an IT practitioner and leader firmly grounded in the academic research that is expected of my work as a faculty member. Knowing that so many times, IT leaders find themselves responding to anecdotal feedback from students and faculty, we have aspired to build a set of tools for collecting empirical data on the quality of campus IT services while also providing IT practitioners with a set of easy-to-use, web-based tools for conducting survey research. From the perspective of MIS researchers, and through a series of focus groups, we’ve developed a survey that we believe encapsulates the very specific things that students, faculty, and staff want from their IT organizations: rich connectivity, better collaboration tools, and a strong support experience. The project has been operational for a decade, and we have over 350,000 completed surveys from more than one hundred institutions. The singular goal is to provide IT practitioners with a firmer basis for planning and resource allocation decisions. The survey is available free of charge, with the work generously supported by the University of Georgia as a part of my appointment as an executive and member of the faculty.

**EDUCAUSE Review:** What advice do you have for young IT professionals about how to get involved in supporting the work of our community?

Chester: I think first, we try to instill the idea that collaboration with others—both at each institution and in the broader community of higher education—is a vital personal and professional development experience. We learn so much from sharing our ideas with others, allowing them to influence our ideas while we simultaneously influence theirs. That type of connectedness and collaboration is a cornerstone of human experience, and it’s what develops strong individual and team contributors. I think we should try to encourage people not to be bashful about sharing their good ideas, whether talking about those ideas in a community forum, a presentation, or a blog or other written narrative. We also should make sure that from a time and resource perspective, professional development is something that is a priority for our organizations. At the University of Georgia, we have a regular, standing budget commitment to professional development each year, regardless of whether it is good economic times or bad. We also make sure that our staff are afforded the time to take advantage of the myriad of opportunities that are available to them. We have a very
large mentoring program in our organization, as well as opportunities within the university and through outside organizations such as EDUCAUSE.

**EDUCAUSE Review:** How can IT professionals build community and make it sustainable and scalable? Do you have suggestions for gaining institutional support for community work?

Chester: I hope that I don't tread too much into something that makes me unpopular, but I think that in order to make our community more sustainable, we've got to get it out of the box that sometimes we and others put ourselves in. What we do is pervasive, but when I walk around an EDUCAUSE event I tend to not see very many people outside the IT profession. Every major area in a higher education institution is represented by a trade association like EDUCAUSE. I think that we as a community have to become more interdisciplinary and forge better ties with all the other professions that those associations represent. In ten years, I would love to walk around an EDUCAUSE event and know that there are presidents, provosts, faculty, and others outside our profession in attendance: student affairs professionals, admissions professionals, development and fund-raising professionals, and institutional research professionals. We've done a good job of outreach to the library profession, but we need to broaden that outreach considerably. Because of the changing nature of technology, I believe that if our profession remains in the technology implementation and operations box, it will be a shrinking discipline. Success is going to require us to be less about the nuts-and-bolts and bits-and-bytes and more about solving problems that fundamentally reform higher education for the better. That's what we must do if our profession/association is to remain sustainable over the next decade.

**EDUCAUSE Review:** What is your secret for successfully balancing institutional leadership with service to the community?

Chester: I've always allowed my community service with EDUCAUSE to be an extension of my institutional work. If you peruse my EDUCAUSE profile and look at the series of presentations and publications over the last fifteen years, you will see that they reflect the institutional work that I was engaged in at the time. With the creation of TechQual+, many of my publications, presentations, and forums were associated with that project. When I was involved in reforming our HR practices at Pepperdine and UGA to become more competency-focused, my EDUCAUSE presentations and publications were on that topic. Today, with my work in institutional research, my engagement in the community is on topics of data and analytics. I think this pattern of activity reflects what I said earlier about personal and professional development being inexorably linked to collaborations with others and about the ability to be confident enough to allow others to influence your own work and thoughts while simultaneously accepting the responsibility of doing the same for others.

**EDUCAUSE Review:** What do you think are the most significant forces at work in higher education today, and how should the community respond?

Chester: My greatest worry is that the members of my generation of higher education leaders are not doing enough to make sure that the cost of a college education remains within the financial reach of everyone who aspires to one. If we do not find better ways to dramatically slow (or roll back) the costs of tuition and fees, I worry that by the time I retire, the higher education experience that both I and my children benefited from will be available only to those with the most economic means. My wife and I have our first grandson now, and we did the math: assuming that college tuition grows at a 7 percent annual rate between now and the time he graduates from high school, the cost of a good public school higher education will be approximately the same as tuition and fees at this country's most exclusive private institutions today. If that happens, we will have reversed course to pre-GI Bill days, when a college experience was an opportunity only for the most affluent, and our country will have lost one of its most vital engines of innovation, economic growth, and community development. Getting in front of and responding to this challenge is the burden for my generation of higher education leaders.

“Success is going to require us to be less about the nuts-and-bolts and bits-and-bytes and more about solving problems that fundamentally reform higher education for the better.”
EDUCAUSE recognizes Emily Lynema for her outstanding record of achievement in the development of user-centered technology applications and for her innovative and collaborative approach to IT development. Associate head of information technology and director of academic technology at the North Carolina State University (NCSU) Libraries, Emily has contributed greatly to the institution’s reputation as a leader in the development of forward-thinking library technologies. Emily started her career as a software developer for the NCSU Libraries,
where her first project was on the libraries’ groundbreaking faceted catalog interface, one that incorporated features from e-commerce sites to provide a more intuitive browsing experience for library users. Debuting in 2006 as the first interface of its type, the catalog garnered national recognition for the NCSU Libraries and became a model for more modern search interfaces for library materials. *Library Journal* named Emily one of its “Movers and Shakers” in 2007 for her work, which influenced the kinds of next-generation catalog interfaces that are now standard.

While continuing to be a pioneer in information discovery and management, Emily has expanded her efforts to include work supporting large-scale, immersive visualization, game development, acoustic modeling, and sensor systems. In her current position, she oversees the work of the Discovery Systems unit, which develops and supports core business applications for resource discovery, delivery, and wayfinding in the NCSU Libraries. As part of her recently expanded portfolio, she also manages the Academic Technology unit, which assists faculty and students in the use of advanced technologies for research, teaching, and learning, including support for the NCSU Libraries’ high-tech spaces and investigation of new and emerging technologies.

Emily also served as co-PI and project director for ALICE (Adaptive Learning Spaces & Interactive Content Environments). This grant, funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services, aimed to develop and prototype a conceptual model on which adaptive learning environments can be built in order to enhance or improve the learning experience for users.

Emily has also been active in the Triangle Research Libraries Network (TRLN), the Kuali Open Library Environment project (OLE), and other national committee appointments. She has an extensive record of publications and presentations and was invited to participate on the Digital Library Federation’s Integrated Library System Discovery Interface Task Group to develop specifications for services required to integrate library software with next-generation discovery systems.

Emily is a natural and innovative leader in the field of library information technologies, bringing enthusiasm, keen insight, and creativity to every project in which she is involved and setting a standard for the profession.

*EDUCAUSE Review*: What advice do you have for those just getting started as IT professionals in higher education?

**Lynema:** Give yourself some time to settle in. Higher education runs at a different pace than the corporate world and has its own set of values and priorities (and budgets). These differences can be disconcerting at first; they have been for many technical staff I have hired. The challenges are no less important, and no less daunting, however, and there are many opportunities to solve complex problems. Take the time to connect with others in your workplace and learn about the difficulties they are facing and the work they are trying to accomplish. Really understanding what we are doing, and why, will help you make the right choices in design and implementation of technology in higher education. It’s a huge benefit to the organization to have IT professionals who can help creatively brainstorm solutions that address underlying problems, even in the face of resource constraints.

“*If you demonstrate your ability to effectively lead initiatives and think strategically at a smaller scale, you’ve taken the right first steps to advance your career.*”

*EDUCAUSE Review*: Any suggestions or “lessons learned” for other women IT professionals with aspirations of career advancement?

**Lynema:** Many women feel pressure to be heavily involved in both professional careers and family life. Don’t assume you have to spend 80 hours a week in the office to advance your career (unless you want to). It’s not necessary to work endless overtime to show you have the capacity to become a leader. Start instead by caring enough to do your job well. Keep your eyes open to what is going on around you, ask questions, and look for opportunities to help tackle thorny problems that cut across the boundaries of your work area. Most likely, you won’t be able to do everything that you would like to, so prioritize, delegate, and say “no” based on what is important to your organization. If you demonstrate your ability to effectively lead initiatives and think strategically at a smaller scale, you’ve taken the right first steps to advance your career.
“The use of technology to enhance creative learning is exploding in higher education, and libraries are well positioned to provide democratized access to learners across the institution.”

**EDUCAUSE Review**: Who inspired you when you started in your career, and who inspires you now?

**Lynema**: I am often most inspired by the peers I work with on a regular basis. For example, I recently began to acknowledge the difficulty I have had thinking and engaging deeply with individual problems since I gained responsibility over a broader swath of our IT organization. So it was incredibly inspiring to sit in on an internal interview with a peer in my organization and listen to his process for systematically approaching complex problems. It reminds me of how much I can learn from those around me. I’m also inspired every time I hear a story of how a staff member identified a problem facing our students, faculty, or staff and put in the time and effort to come up with a creative solution that made a difference. That’s exactly what I want to do, and it gives me that extra bit of motivation when others remind me what we can accomplish together.

**EDUCAUSE Review**: What can others in our community do to support young IT professionals?

**Lynema**: Take a moment to see the potential in others. I would likely not be in my current position at my organization if someone had not stepped up to tell me that I had what it took. Sometimes we want to keep people working in their current role because they are good at it and because trying to replace them would be painful. Instead, offer them opportunities to grow in responsibility, even if it means they end up leaving for another position. On the whole, the community of higher education will likely be better off.

**EDUCAUSE Review**: What excites you about libraries, information technology, and higher education today?

**Lynema**: Libraries around the United States are transforming their reputation and identity as they become centers for learning and collaboration, and that is very exciting for those of us who are looking toward the future. Libraries have always provided centralized access to resources that were too difficult for individuals to acquire on their own. For many years, these resources were books. More recently, libraries have been enabling access to ultra-expensive online scientific journals and databases. With the dawn of the Internet, libraries began providing centralized access to technology such as desktop computing. The use of technology to enhance creative learning is exploding in higher education, and libraries are well positioned to provide democratized access to learners across the institution.

I think makerspaces and visualization spaces are just the start of this movement. Libraries are poised to identify new technology that can impact research, teaching, and learning and to find ways to help students and faculty employ that technology to their benefit and the benefit of the institution as a whole.