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 for individual achievement and celebrates exemplary leadership that has had a significant and 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 DEI Leadership Award acknowledges exemplary leadership in advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion in our community with clear positive impacts as a result of these efforts.

The Rising Star Award spotlights emerging higher education IT leaders whose records reflect ongoing and exceptional growth in contribution to the profession and increased levels of leadership, responsibility, and sphere of impact.

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The 2020 EDUCAUSE Leadership Award recognizes John “Jack” Suess, Vice President of Information Technology and Chief Information Officer at the University of Maryland Baltimore County (UMBC), for his servant leadership at UMBC, his trailblazing contributions to IT research, and the enduring impact he has had on the higher education IT community.

Jack has served the UMBC community his entire career, starting in 1978 as a student employee in the university’s computer center and becoming a staff member in Academic Computing in 1981. In 1997, he was tapped to lead the UMBC central IT unit. In 2000, he was named CIO, and in 2005 he was appointed Vice President and CIO. Jack has led or been involved in almost every major UMBC technology initiative that has supported advanced research, teaching and learning, administrative systems, or technology furthering student success. Along the way, he has held roles as a systems programmer, project manager, research collaborator, and part-time instructor. Throughout his career at UMBC, Jack has leveraged technology and analytics to expand the use of IT services and technology in teaching, learning, administration, and academic research.

His national contributions include the field of networking: in 1986 he led the effort to connect UMBC to the internet as part of the National Science Foundation Network (NSFNET), and in 1998 he was Principal Investigator for UMBC’s connection to the NSF’s very-high-performance Backbone Network Service (vBNS). In the field of identity management, Jack led UMBC’s participation as an Internet2 middleware early adopter in 2000, and he served as the higher education representative on the NIST National Strategy for Trusted Identities in Cyberspace (NSTIC) from 2012 to 2017. In recent years, he has worked to expand the university’s cyberinfrastructure in high-performance computing, storage, and visualization, serving as Principal Investigator on UMBC’s NSF Cyberinfrastructure award in 2014, and has been one of the leaders supporting national efforts in advancing the use of learning analytics for student success.

Jack is a strong collaborator who works quietly behind the scenes to build consensus. Across every project, initiative, and technology implementation, his overarching concern is the impact of technology on faculty, staff, and students. In recognition of his strong commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), Jack...
Jack stands out not only because of the work he has done but also because of his investment in others. He is a thoughtful and honest mentor, an inquisitive researcher, and a groundbreaking innovator.

Jack’s service to EDUCAUSE spans twenty years. Among his many other contributions to the organization, Jack has served on the EDUCAUSE Board of Directors (as a member, vice-chair, and chair), the Higher Education Information Security Council (HEISC) (as a member and chair), the Network Policy Council, the Seminars on Academic Computing (SAC) Committee and SAC Board of Directors, the IT Issues Panel, the ECAR Working Groups Advisory Committee, and the EDUCAUSE Annual Meeting Program Committee (as a member and chair). He is currently a member of the EDUCAUSE Policy Advisory Committee and the Analytics Services Design Panel (ASDP) and is a frequent contributor to EDUCAUSE Review.

Nationally, Jack has served, or is presently serving, on the boards of Internet2, IMS Global, REN-ISAC, and the NIST National Strategy for Trusted Identities in Cyberspace.

In 2004, Jack was selected for the UMBC Presidential Leadership Award, the highest recognition the university bestows on staff members. He was named UMBC Alumni Volunteer of the Year in 2000 and received the Internet2 Presidential Leadership Award in 2011.

Jack stands out not only because of the work he has done but also because of his investment in others. He is a thoughtful and honest mentor, an inquisitive researcher, and a groundbreaking innovator. He has dedicated his career to seeking the best path forward for his staff, his university, and the broader higher education IT community. Jack Suess exemplifies what it means to be an inspirational leader in higher education.
The 2020 EDUCAUSE Community Leadership Award recognizes Hilary J. Baker, Vice President for Information Technology and CIO Emeritus at California State University, Northridge (CSUN), for her tireless and unwavering commitment to building community and advancing the higher ed IT profession through her exceptional leadership, mentorship, and dedicated service.

Throughout her career, Hilary has been a champion in helping IT organizations to implement sound planning and innovative service models to support their campus communities. As Senior Director of IT Services at the California State University Office of the Chancellor, she effectively worked across boundaries to lead system-wide planning, design, and implementation of an ERP administrative systems project for the system’s 23 campuses—the largest project of its kind in higher education at that time. Later, at CSUN, she was responsible for shaping the overall direction and vision for information technology at the university, including implementing CSUN Technology Vision 2022, a university-wide strategic plan to leverage technology and create a more digitally enabled institution in support of student success. During her tenure at CSUN, she also led several innovative and award-winning technology projects, including student competitions with virtual/augmented reality and artificial intelligence themes, a student/faculty tablet initiative, and an AI-powered CSUN chatbot.

In addition to furthering higher education by exploring and implementing new technology initiatives, Hilary also has a natural ability to identify future leaders and to foster talent by providing a positive learning environment in which people can grow professionally. She not only generously supported and mentored emerging leaders but also challenged her direct reports to help identify organizational staff with the aptitude and potential to grow their responsibilities.

At the time of her retirement in December 2019, Hilary was a member of the EDUCAUSE Board of Directors, having served in that role since 2017. During her service on the board, Hilary and EDUCAUSE President and CEO John O’Brien spearheaded the work of the International Task Force to facilitate opportunities for...
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Hilary embodies the community leadership qualities most valued in the higher ed IT profession. The impact she had on those fortunate enough to have worked with her is unparalleled. Her ability to create environments that encourage professional growth and potential and her dedication to the success and advancement of others, particularly women in the IT field, have made Hilary J. Baker an empowering force for all those she has helped and inspired in their own professional journeys.
The 2020 EDUCAUSE DEI Leadership Award recognizes Deborah Keyek-Franssen, Associate Vice President and Dean of Online and Continuing Education at the University of Utah, for her dynamic and visionary leadership to promote positive relationships between the academy and the IT community and for her research and advocacy in support of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) across the IT practice.

DEBORAH KEYEK-FRANSSEN
For building a culture of inclusion, engagement, and improvement across the higher ed IT profession; for providing creative and visionary leadership, training, and support to help IT professionals advance in their careers; for offering mentorship and being an exceptional role model for what it means to lead through service.

Throughout her career, Deb has understood the need to increase diversity in higher education information technology, to ensure inclusive environments for IT staff, and to advocate for the technology tools and practices that would promote equity, especially among students. As Associate Vice President, Digital Education & Engagement, at the University of Colorado (CU) System, she was instrumental in convening leaders and practitioners from the CU System’s four campuses and creating intentionally collaborative efforts to explore innovation in teaching and learning with technology.

Deb’s work portfolio is characterized by her deep commitment to DEI. She has actively promoted programs designed to encourage and support women in their choice of information technology as a profession. As co-director of the Colorado Coalition for Gender and IT, she led a statewide nonprofit coalition of education, industry, and government representatives to increase participation of girls and women working in and studying technology. In this role, she secured grant funding directed to research...
Deb has an extensive portfolio of advocating for DEI, open educational resources, and student success and STEM initiatives in the higher education IT community, both nationally and internationally.
The 2020 EDUCAUSE Rising Star Award recognizes Shannon Dunn, Assistant Director at the University of Florida Information Technology (UFIT) Center for Instructional Technology and Training (CITT) for her exemplary growth and achievements in the areas of instructional design, educational technology, and staff leadership.

Since joining the University of Florida (UF) five years ago, Shannon has taken on increasing responsibility, moving from her role as an instructional designer at the CITT to her appointment as an Assistant Director in UFIT, managing instructional design and educational technology services and staff at the CITT. Shannon has been instrumental in expanding the role of instructional designers at UF. In addition to course-development services, UF instructional designers now offer teaching and technology consultations, training, and curriculum development services. Shannon has also implemented many technology-focused programs and services that have positively impacted the entire university. In 2017, she introduced a slate of instructional development workshops, including some of the university’s first training modules for asynchronous instructors. In 2019, she led the inaugural UF Teaching TechXploration, an event aimed at educating faculty about the tools, academic technologies, and services available at UF and advising staff on how faculty would like to leverage technology in their courses. She has also cultivated communities of practice around augmented reality / virtual reality (AR/VR) and 3D scanning/photogrammetry.

Shannon actively promotes collaboration and inclusion across the organization. She not only facilitates meetings and workshops to improve teamwork within her unit but also encourages staff from the CITT to join committees and increase their representation. Among other things, she has encouraged CITT staff to participate in the LGBTQ+ Presidential Advisory Committee, the General Education Curriculum Committee, and the Provost’s Student Success Task Force. Shannon has also championed training programs to help faculty improve the accessibility and inclusivity of their online courses.

Always willing to take on new responsibilities and challenges, Shannon has served on a variety of councils and committees at UF and has progressed into leadership appointments. She served on the new faculty orientation work group and currently serves on the Teaching Innovations Committee. She is co-chair of the Teaching with Technology Faculty Learning Community and chair of the multi-institution Learning Technology Consortium. Because of her experience in academia and insights into the needs of UF faculty, staff, and students, she was asked to lead development of the UF Strategic Plan for IT 2020–2025.
Shannon has championed significant innovation at UFIT while maintaining a focus on access and inclusion. At the same time, she has established herself as a gifted instructional designer, an excellent mentor, and a compassionate leader.

Shannon has demonstrated a commitment to mentorship, professional development, and service to EDUCAUSE. She completed the EDUCAUSE Learning Technology Leadership Program in 2018 and has served as a proposal reviewer for EDUCAUSE and the EDUCAUSE Learning Initiative (ELI). She has been a presenter at the ELI Annual Meeting and the EDUCAUSE Annual Conference and has encouraged her colleagues to do the same. Because of Shannon’s recommendations and guidance, 80 percent of the instructional designers in the CITT have presented at an EDUCAUSE conference or completed an EDUCAUSE course or program. Indeed, one of the hallmarks of Shannon’s leadership style is her dedication to building up those around her. She actively encourages staff members to seek out professional development opportunities and mentors women who are pursuing careers in academia. She also started an internship program for undergraduate students who are seeking experience in academic technology.

Shannon has championed significant innovation at UFIT while maintaining a focus on access and inclusion. At the same time, she has established herself as a gifted instructional designer, an excellent mentor, and a compassionate leader. Through her contributions to UF and EDUCAUSE, Shannon Dunn has distinguished herself as a rising star in the higher education IT community.