Crisis are not rare in higher education. Since EDUCAUSE was formed twenty-two years ago by the joining of CAUSE and Educom, the community has faced a recession, a Great Recession, and now, a pandemic. At a more local level, we have seen statewide, provincial, and regional crises, while colleges and universities have dealt with enrollment drops, fires, student tragedies, and so much more. Our community experience has been marked as much by how we weather our challenges as by how we celebrate our successes, but it’s impossible to deny that the stakes today are uniquely high as we recognize and navigate a new set of ongoing realities.

I’ve heard repeatedly that you are not waiting for things to return to normal (whatever that was) but are thinking, urgently and strategically, about what your campus will look like after the adrenaline fades and our collective heart rate returns to calmer rhythms.

EDUCAUSE is moving with you. We are reinventing the association to be more responsive, agile, focused, and collaborative. Yes, these may be words you’re hearing tossed around with abandon these days, but for us they also happen to be critical as we work to stay relevant and responsive to you.

One of the most visible signs of the changes I’m talking about is our transition to an all-digital EDUCAUSE Review. We did not lightly make the decision to retire the award-winning print edition after twenty years (and another thirty years as Educom Review before that). But we know that online publication gets content into your hands more quickly while also ensuring that we can cover the depth and breadth of critical topics that arise for you in real time. EDUCAUSE Review consumption has increased by more than 90 percent over the past six months compared with the same time period last year, and we want to continue to meet your needs for timely and relevant material.

While we’ve adjusted how we share information with you, we’re changing what we share as well. For example, we love to provide the thoughtful, deliberate “long-form” research you expect and other content that tracks trends across years, and we will continue to do so. But lately we have increased our focus on agile QuickPolls (a poll

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goess out on Monday, with results shared on Friday) and flexible, spontaneous QuickTalks (like this one), for when you need answers now. We’ll continue to share strategic visions, to think big, and to benchmark across the long term, but you’ll also see more applied tools and resources that you can use to solve immediate challenges.

Meanwhile, EDUCAUSE itself has moved to being a fully online employer. We have shifted from 50 percent to 100 percent distributed employees connecting digitally with each other—and with you.

To advance these connections and collaboration, we are excited to be increasing and enhancing mentoring and networking capabilities. EDUCAUSE has launched 1:1 and group mentoring opportunities this fall (learn more here). Mentor matching at EDUCAUSE allows you to pick your own mentor or mentee or use the software to find an appropriate colleague. In addition to our mentoring opportunities, this year’s EDUCAUSE Annual Conference attendees will experience enhanced networking capabilities, with community matchmaking embedded in the online event platform. This system is designed so that attendees can connect with others who have similar interests, and it will also help attendees find solution providers in a targeted and meaningful way. In addition, we are working to provide a new community communication resource. After all, email and listservs, though intensively used, shouldn’t be the only way for members to connect.

Before the pandemic, we were already expanding our EDUCAUSE Institute programs online, and current events have, of course, accelerated that process. Online versions of the EDUCAUSE Management Institute and New IT Managers Institute were piloted this summer, and we offered a second New IT Managers Institute in September. The Learning Technology Leadership Institute and the Senior Directors Institute will be ready to launch online later this year. Renovations to our Leadership Institute continue as we gear up for more online and hybrid professional development offerings in the long term. Institute programs are open to individuals or teams, with special Institute pricing and scheduling options for campuses or systems team cohorts.

Continuing the “Great Pivot of 2020,” all EDUCAUSE conferences in 2020 were moved online, and we’re now looking ahead to 2021 to determine how long this online-only focus will extend. We certainly look forward to holding meetings in person as soon as we can, but our new online capabilities will make those events stronger and more accessible to more of our members. We have already heard that the ability to register for an EDUCAUSE event at a fraction of the cost of attending a meeting in person has put our events within reach for so many more.

Finally, as EDUCAUSE moves forward as an organization, we are energized to continue to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion in light of the dramatic worldwide outrage set into motion by events this year. For a social justice crisis spanning hundreds of years, the solution will require a deep and broad effort that combines awareness with action. In 2019, EDUCAUSE  “CIO’s Commitment on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion”

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