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.

Moran Technology Consulting, Gold Partner, is proud to sponsor the recognition of visionary leaders who are addressing today’s realities and transforming the strategic role of information technology across higher education.
The 2017 EDUCAUSE Leadership Award is given to Susan Metros, former associate vice provost for Information Technology Services and deputy CIO for Technology Enhanced Learning at the University of Southern California (USC), to recognize her wide-ranging and remarkable contributions to leadership in higher education and technology-enabled teaching and learning.

With career experience that spans four decades and myriad roles in higher education, Susan has combined an expansive and highly creative vision with an infectious “can-do” attitude and a keen ability to motivate and energize her staff toward a common purpose. Her transformational leadership has touched on all forms of educational and instructional technology, multimedia, social networking and collaboration, online learning, visual literacy, mobile learning, and more. One colleague remarked that Susan “is one of those rare individuals who possess the skills to imagine what might be possible and the organizational and management prowess to turn such ideas into reality.”

Susan began her career as an academic and quickly advanced into leadership roles at the University of Tennessee, where she established the first BFA and MFA degrees in Computer-Enhanced Visual Design. At the Ohio State University, she conceived and helped launch the Digital Union, an innovative space that served as a testing ground for creative and scholarly activities and for multidisciplinary, experimental projects promoting technology in teaching and learning. At USC, she led teams that reimagined and renovated the university’s 200-plus learning spaces and redesigned the university’s web and mobile presences. She also provided vision and operational expertise and support for developing and delivering technology-enhanced learning, across multiple disciplines, both on campus and online. In the role of interim CIO at the university’s Marshall School of Business, she conducted an important year-long study that resulted in a report and recommendations for “The Future Directions for IT Leadership and
Organization.” Finally, serving as associate dean for the USC Jimmy Iovine and Andre Young Academy for Arts, Technology and the Business of Innovation, she helped design the curriculum, plan the program’s makerspace, and directed the creation of a new online master of science degree in Integrated Design, Business and Technology.

With deep academic roots, Susan has held tenured professorships at Michigan State University, the University of Tennessee, and the Ohio State University. At USC, she was appointed to faculty positions in three schools: Art and Design; Education; and Communication and Journalism. She has an impressive list of refereed and invited publications on topics running the gamut from leadership and mentoring to creativity and innovation, to visual and multimedia literacy, to the role of educational technology in transforming higher education. A committed and compassionate educator, she has taught courses on digital literacies and has served as a principal designer on several international award-winning multimedia and web-based projects.

Susan’s many contributions to EDUCAUSE include service on the association’s board of directors and an appointment as dean for the Breakthrough Models Academy, a program to advance next-generation leadership in higher education. She has written widely for EDUCAUSE publications and has presented keynotes and conference sessions at a variety of venues. She was a Frye Leadership Fellow in 2001 and later served as a mentor for others in the program. She has an unwavering commitment to developing leadership abilities in others and has worked to ensure that EDUCAUSE creates new strategies and programming for identifying, cultivating, and mentoring the future generation of IT leaders. In addition to her EDUCAUSE service, she was a board member for the New Media Consortium (NMC) and currently sits on the advisory council for the Colorado State University Global Campus and serves as a senior fellow for the Center for Digital Education.

Susan has embraced leadership from the unique perspective of a seasoned technology professional, experienced designer, and lifelong educator. Her accomplishments in higher education lie at the strategic intersection between the discovery and adoption of new and emerging technologies that support teaching, learning, research, and outreach, and the IT core enterprise. Drawing on her
creative vision, problem-solving skills, collaborative work style, and big-hearted enthusiasm to support others in their professional journeys, Susan has made a significant and lasting impact on the higher education IT profession and in the greater higher education community.

**EDUCAUSE Review:** What advice would you give to those who aspire to leadership roles in higher education? How have your values and ethos shaped the choices you've made in your career?

**Metros:** The most meaningful advice I can give to those aspiring to be leaders, whether in higher education or another industry, is that leading comes from within. It's not something you can study and overnight become a leadership expert. There is no test to pass, no
certificate to earn. Leadership is heartfelt and experiential. For me, it takes into account past encounters, current experiences, and future potential. It is built on a foundation of common sense, acquired wisdom, dogged tenacity, keen observation, and a hefty dose of unbridled curiosity. You must reflect on your own life experiences to determine which ones hold leadership insights. It is the unpacking of these experiences that serves as the basis for shaping the values you stand by and for creating your own unique and personalized leadership philosophy.

I have made some good leadership decisions, and I have made some that I have regretted. The good ones always come after I am afforded the luxury of time to examine the various facets of a situation and to listen carefully to those who would be influenced by the decision. By reflecting on my past experiences and visualizing myself in the shoes of those affected, I am able to imagine future scenarios, weigh options, and make what I hope will be informed and heartfelt decisions.

**EDUCAUSE Review: Who inspired you to leadership?**

**Metros:** I have worked in higher education for close to four decades, serving as staff, faculty, technology executive, and academic leader. During that time, I have worked for many great leaders and for some really bad ones. First, the bad: I have reported to bullies, narcissists, sociopaths, sexual harassers, embezzlers, micromanagers, and bosses who were just downright incompetent. In almost every case, karma eventually ruled, and they were relieved of their positions or moved on—but not before causing havoc and dissonance within the organization. Although these situations were highly stressful and personally demoralizing, I learned how to protect my team and survive difficult working conditions. I learned, firsthand, important lessons on how not to lead.

On the other hand, I was fortunate to have worked for many great leaders. Joseph Kuszai, professor emeritus in Graphic Design at Michigan State University, was my teacher and mentor when I served as his graduate assistant while earning my MFA and, later, as his colleague when I was hired into the department as an assistant professor. Joe taught his students that learning to be a designer was never about the destination; it was always about the journey: process over product. I was inculcated in his unique style of creative problem-solving, now popularized as design thinking. I have incorporated this lesson into my own
leadership philosophy. How you go about solving a problem—empathizing with the user, alternating between convergent and divergent thinking, and brainstorming—is as important as the eventual outcome. While solutions succeed or fail, processes evolve and improve with use over time. I chose to honor Joe by donating the generous scholarship funding that comes with the EDUCAUSE Leadership Award to the Joe and Shirley Kuszai Endowed Scholarship, in support of undergraduate graphic design education at Michigan State.

Later I served as deputy CIO for Ilee Rhimes when he was the CIO at Ohio State and, again, at USC. Ilee was an inspirational leader as well as a gifted mentor. He taught me that there is no wrong way to do something, there are simply better ways: listening before I speak, and always taking the long view and doing what's best for the organization. Ilee cared deeply about his staff and made all of us, no matter where we sat in the organization, feel heard and appreciated. He encouraged us to have pride in our work and trusted us to deliver on our promises. He was fond of repeating the truism: "I don't care how much you know until I know how much you care." Following his example, I aspire to be the kind of leader who values and respects people over the technology and tools they support.

EDUCAUSE Review: How did coming from a nontraditional field affect your ability to lead technology organizations?

Metros: My background and academic degrees are in art and design. Even as a child, I interacted with the world visually. Novelist E. F. Forster quipped: "How do I know what I think until I see what I say?" That describes me perfectly! I would much rather illustrate my thoughts than write them down. I see patterns in everything; I map concepts and chart progress; I visualize ideas. This acute state of visual awareness has provided me with an ability to picture processes, envision scenarios, and diagram hierarchies of order where chaos once existed. I communicate best through storytelling. Story
perspective, adding depth and richness to their collaborations and interactions.

EDUCAUSE Review: Do you have suggestions on how best to stay current as a higher education IT professional?

Metros: Many of the IT leaders who are drawn to jobs in academia are committed to continuing their education and sharing that knowledge with their staff and constituents. Fortunately, we work in an environment that respects the quest for knowledge and rewards intellectual effort.

I was able to make the case for professional development support throughout my career. Highlights included being selected to participate in the Committee on Institutional Cooperation (CIC) Fellows and Emerging Academic Leaders Program and acceptance into the EDUCAUSE Frye Leadership Institute. I have always encouraged my staff to continue their education, even if doing so meant they were promoted to positions outside of the organization. I see Rhimes often quoted motivational speaker Zig Ziglar, who remarked: “The only thing worse than training an employee and having them leave, is to not train them, and have them stay.”

I have a responsibility to give back to the profession that prepared me for what I consider to be a successful career. I have served as a leader, instructor, and mentor for many EDUCAUSE professional development programs and often present and publish with colleagues new to the profession. Most recently, I earned my professional coaching credential and work almost exclusively with clients employed in information technology. This is hardly altruistic. There is a well-known adage among seasoned educators: “Nobody learns as much as the teacher.” While I provide guidance to others, I also gain knowledge, build new skills, and make new acquaintances that often grow into lasting friendships.

EDUCAUSE Review: In what ways can our profession be more welcoming of women in the field and in leadership roles?

Metros: I believe that women today have more opportunities to move into IT leadership roles. The IT profession is no longer the exclusive domain of “guys” with heavy-duty technical expertise but is now a space where a balance of technical knowhow and soft skills is sought out and commended. IT leaders today are a more...
diverse group, many with nontraditional backgrounds in the humanities, education, and the arts. They are technology-savvy individuals who can lead teams, prioritize clients' needs, communicate across a variety of constituencies, and recruit and retain talent.

So, how do women move into leadership roles? First, like their male counterparts, they need to network and actively support each other in their career quests. They also must be willing to take action. When I arrived at USC, there was no such network, so I organized Wine, Women, Whatever. WWW was an informal group of upwardly mobile women leaders across campus who were eager to meet like-minded women and support each other's professional growth (while sipping wine!).

Women often have to take initiative and ask for what they want. I have a confession. When I received the 2017 EDUCAUSE Awards Request for Nominations, I flagged it and did nothing until a month before it was due. I finally got up the nerve to ask a USC colleague of mine to consider nominating me. Making this request was really difficult for me, but I knew that I was not a typical choice. Over the 37 years the leadership award (in its many iterations) has been awarded, it has been given to 52 men, 1 institute, and 10 women (including me). You also can count, on one hand, the number of times the award has been bestowed on someone in educational technology.

**EDUCAUSE Review:** How can we prepare ourselves for the higher education IT challenges ahead?

**Metros:** Academia is an industry vulnerable to disruption. If we don't vet and implement the newest and most promising technologies, and provide our academic communities with the training and support to use them, we will be left behind by entrepreneurial companies that will do so. We, as leaders, need to carve out time for our staff to explore and play with new technologies, push the limits, make mistakes, and start the process all over again. That requires empathic leaders who value the contributions of staff, respect their expertise, and provide them with opportunities to take risks and make a difference. At the end of the day, it's always about the people, never about the technology!

*Note*

This year, EDUCAUSE is granting its Community Leadership Award to Mark Bruhn, associate vice president for public safety and institutional assurance at Indiana University (IU), for his wide-ranging and tireless efforts in leading and advancing the critical work of the higher education security community.

At Indiana University, Mark’s visionary leadership has led to IU’s national prominence in the areas of technology and information security, policy, and privacy. During his three decades at the university, Mark has served in several positions of increasing responsibility to meet the continually shifting and expanding security landscape. Currently, Mark not only continues as the executive responsible for information security, privacy, and policy for IU but also, for the past eight years, has taken the lead in other important areas of safety and security, including emergency management, environmental health and safety, law enforcement, events management, and physical security for more than 130,000-plus faculty, staff, and students on eight campuses across the state of Indiana.

Mark played a leading role in identifying the need for, and then conceptualizing a plan for, a national information-sharing and analysis center to serve the higher education community. In 2002, he co-founded the Research and Educational Networking Information Sharing and Analysis Center (REN-ISAC), based at Indiana University, which provides critical threat information to institutions, along with recommendations on mitigating these risks. As a testament to Mark’s executive oversight and community-driven approach to improving cybersecurity, REN-ISAC has grown substantially—from 60 institutions in 2006 to over 560 institutions in 2017—and has dramatically changed the way the higher education community shares security information across institutions.

Among his many other accomplishments, Mark led a project to develop the Indiana Information Interchange, forerunner of the current Indiana University Information Environment. In a stint as associate vice president for

2017 EDUCAUSE Community Leadership Award

Mark Bruhn:
For meritorious leadership and advocacy in higher education security and policy practices at the campus, state, and national levels; for leading the development of a national center for information sharing and analysis of higher education security issues; for mentorship and community-building within the security sector in service to higher education.
telecommunications, he was the university’s lead executive on the advancement of I-Light, Indiana’s statewide optical network for higher education, a process requiring extensive work with elected state officials, state agencies, and CIOs at colleges and universities throughout the state. He is an adjunct faculty member at Indiana University and was instrumental in the creation of the IU Center for Applied Cybersecurity Research, where he serves as the associate director.

Mark has been active in all aspects of EDUCAUSE involvement: writing, mentoring, presenting, and taking on numerous volunteer roles, including serving as chair of the EDUCAUSE Annual Conference Program Committee in 2010. He has authored or coauthored many publications and has provided peer assessments for other colleges and universities to offer sound advice and best practices for reducing security risks. He was a founding member of the Higher Education Information Security Council (HEISC), originally established (in 2000) by EDUCAUSE and Internet2 as the Computer and Network Security Task Force. Over his long tenure with HEISC, he has been instrumental in advancing the topics of policy, legal, compliance, and security awareness, among many other issues. He was part of a dedicated group that helped launch the EDUCAUSE Security Professionals Conference in 2004, and through his involvement with IU’s Center for Applied Cybersecurity Research (CACR), he established an annual Indiana statewide security conference that has served as a model for other regions.

Over the span of his career, Mark has been a voice of clarity and authority for security issues in higher education and a role model for others in the IT profession. Cited for his generosity of spirit and his ability to foster strong partnerships and bring people together around a common cause, Mark exemplifies the qualities of a true leader in our community.

EDUCAUSE Review: You were in a security role before most of us recognized the risks inherent in information technology. Did you foresee the threats and challenges of cybersecurity today?

Bruhn: IU President Michael McRobbie likes to say that Tom Davis (now the IU chief security officer) and I were “in a dark dank basement working on security in relative obscurity” when he arrived at the university, as vice president for information technology, in 1997. The part about a dark dank basement wasn’t accurate, except maybe metaphorically. Our dedicated attention to security started circa 1987, and the notion that we could follow a single dedicated cable from a monitor
on a desk to a controller to the mainframe was comforting to us. But the writing was already on the white board (literally), and we immediately recognized we would have to struggle to get our colleagues to understand the risks attached to the favored strategy to make things more open and accessible. As connections to the mainframe became less concrete, we were able to get additional security tools, primarily CA-Top Secret—and I give Polley McClure credit for good foresight as the initial head of global IT at IU. She approved the implementation of two-factor authentication for access to certain mainframe systems.

We started to meet up with other host-control product administrators at a vendor conference called CA-World, which was our first foray into interacting with and learning from others. The point at which we really became more active in the fledgling higher education security community—the same point at which many college and university security administrators started to come above ground, so to speak—was when our mainframe was connected to Bitnet and to the campus Ethernet (~1988). At that point, I remember Tom and I looked at each other over our cubicle tops and agreed that our world had just gotten dramatically more complex and that what we had been doing in that “dank dark basement” was no comparison to what we were now up against. We were right, of course.

**EDUCAUSE Review:** How did you work with the higher education IT community to advance cybersecurity?

**Bruhn:** I wandered into a security meeting at the University of Michigan (in Oxford Hall, I think), where I met Virginia Rezmierski of the University of Michigan and Chuck Smith of Penn State, from whom many of us subsequently learned a lot about necessary approaches and attitudes. We are still active in the descendent of that group, now called the Security Working Group of the Big Ten Academic Alliance (BTAA), and I think everyone who is or has been a member of that group considers it to be a family and a very beneficial forum. We discuss and share practical operational issues, of course, but we also push the envelope on the advancement of education and awareness, dwelling on risk management around data classifications.

Our community contact grew as the already expanding security staff started to attend Educom, CAUSE, and then EDUCAUSE meetings, where security presentations became more and more prevalent. At an early EDUCAUSE conference, some of us convened in a small conference room to talk about creating a task force—and as I recall, the room was packed with attendees. Out of this meeting—facilitated I believe by Don Riley, Gordon Wishon, Rodney Petersen, Jack Suess, and Steve Worona, among others—came the seeds for the EDUCAUSE/Internet2 Computer and Network Security Task force (now HEISC), within which I played various roles and which not only fostered valuable discussion and an increase in emphasis on security but also guided the development of many good practices and practical tools. This group was, and is, a recognition and encouragement of the classic “raise all boats” approach. Those of us at IU threw much into the pot, but we took a lot out as well, and many other institutions participated in the same way.

**EDUCAUSE Review:** What changes have you seen in the EDUCAUSE and higher
education IT community over the years, and how do you think these might affect our future?

Bruhn: The “miscreants,” our adversaries, have been collaborating and teaching each other much longer than we have. In fact, anyone can buy hacking tools that he/she can deploy with minimal technical experience—and in some cases can receive technical support for that deployment as well. But with the advent of the EDUCAUSE collaborations, more presentations about operations and strategies, interactions with other entities such as SANS, the creation of the REN-ISAC, many regional meetings, Internet2’s work on security-related NET+ offerings, and much more, we are now talking a lot and interacting and sharing a lot. This has to continue, and it should even advance to shared hands-on expertise and joint automated mitigations (the OMNISOC partnership within the BTAA is an early example), because when other higher education institutions are more secure, the rest of us are also more secure, and the chance that exploitation of college/university-based technologies will cause havoc on the Internet at large is minimized.

**EDUCAUSE Review:** What recommendations would you give to someone trying to build a community of practice? How can we build communities to solve our common problems?

Bruhn: There has to be recognition that there are common goals, aside from any natural competition. And there has to be recognition that each collaborator likely has strengths that are complementary to everyone else’s strengths. In higher education, we all like to think that we have our own ducks-in-a-row, but we need to recognize that someone out there very likely has a better scheme for duck arrangement, and we need to reach out to compare. We can compete for students, and we can compete in athletics, but if some of our campuses are badly secured, that represents a serious risk for the rest of us.

**EDUCAUSE Review:** What do you find most rewarding when it comes to community leadership?

Bruhn: I very much like seeing a collaboration that results in broad value. I go back to when the data-breach management toolkit was developed by HEISC. I am sure that toolkit is now the basis for response procedures on thousands of campuses. I knew it was the basis for ours. Anything like that—where all boats are raised—those are the efforts and benefits that I like to see.

**EDUCAUSE Review:** What goals could IT professionals across higher education pursue collectively, as a community?

Bruhn: First, to quote Stephen Hawking as sampled in Pink Floyd’s *Keep Talking*, we need to keep talking. And we need to keep sharing. The REN-ISAC needs to keep growing. EDUCAUSE and Internet2 and similar organizations need to continue to provide support for and facilitation of advancement. The goal, then, is an environment that discredits the historical headlines decrying campuses as bases of operations for all manner of attacks on commercial and government entities. Simply put, we need to strive for a situation in which the miscreants don’t see us as an easy target and as a place from which they can comfortably and confidently wage war on the Internet. Working together as a community, we can create this environment.
The 2017 EDUCAUSE Rising Star Award is presented to Liv Gjestvang, associate vice president in the Office of Distance Education and eLearning at the Ohio State University, for her exemplary leadership and achievements in the area of teaching and learning technologies and how they can be used to improve the student experience and for her commitment to promoting and supporting issues of diversity within and beyond the workplace.

Since her arrival at Ohio State in 2006, Liv has led or participated in many inventive educational technology projects. She helped launch the OSU Digital Storytelling program for teaching faculty to share their stories and increase the visibility of their academic work. She founded Youth Video OUTreach, a project to teach nine gay and lesbian teens the skills to create a documentary about their lives, in partnership with Ohio State’s Wexner Center for the Arts and with funding from the Ohio Arts Council. Under her direction, Ohio State’s Digital First initiative, recognized for the development of digital content to transform teaching and learning, received the New Media Consortium (NMC) Center of Excellence Award in 2013 and Apple’s Distinguished Program status in 2015.

Liv's energy, enthusiasm, and commitment to higher education resonate through every project in which she is involved. She led Ohio State’s Innovate Conference, featuring best practices in digital pedagogies, and supported the launch of Ohio State’s open content initiatives. She was coauthor of College Ready Ohio, a $13.5 million grant from the Ohio Department of Education in support of college readiness for high school students in Ohio, and Liv and her team launched Ohio State’s Affordable Learning Exchange, a campus-wide partnership to reduce the cost of course materials with the commitment.
of saving $10 million by 2020. Liv’s dynamic, collaborative leadership style and contributions were recognized by Ohio State when she received the university’s Distinguished Staff Award in 2014.

Perhaps Liv’s greatest impact on the higher education IT community comes from her personal commitment to her peers and to future IT leaders. She is a faculty member and co-director for the EDUCAUSE Learning Technologies Leadership Institute through 2019. An active contributor to EDUCAUSE and other professional societies, she has served as a reader for EDUCAUSE programs and has several presentations at EDUCAUSE conferences to her credit. She has presented widely on transformational leadership, learning technology, and community change at NMC events and at international conferences on LGBTQ human rights. She displays a selfless commitment to the success of others and is known as a generous collaborator, thoughtful listener, wise consultant, and consummate coach.

Liv’s work at Ohio State is complemented by her service as a member of the Board of Directors and the Teaching and Learning Group of Unizin, a consortium of eleven universities working to improve the teaching and learning experience through digital environments. Liv also helped to shape what is now the Big Ten Academic Alliance Learning Technology Leaders (LTi). Through her leadership in the Alliance, she has created new partnerships to advance the topics of analytics, flexible learning spaces, and the pedagogies that support those spaces. An example of this is her team’s proposal for a Faculty Content Camp, in which faculty create banks of open-assessment questions for use by others in their disciplines free of charge.

Liv’s demonstrated track record of sustained service and increasing impact in higher education and her collaborative and innovative style of leadership are clear evidence of her position as a rising star in the profession.

EDUCAUSE Review: To what do you attribute your early success?

Gjestvang: I have always worked on projects that are important to me personally. Finding the connections between the opportunities for change in higher education, my role, and the things I care most about has been really motivating for me. Also, at Ohio State I’ve had the privilege to work with a team of people who inspire me every day—who are creative and passionate about what they do, who are hard-working and committed to the university and our team, and who are honest, open, and supportive on a daily basis. I love the people I work with and am humbled and honored to work with them. I think it’s the combination of passion, vision, and strong partnerships that has helped me grow professionally.

EDUCAUSE Review: Are there specific projects you are particularly proud of?

Gjestvang: In 2004, Ohio voters supported a constitutional amendment to define marriage specifically as the relationship between one man and one woman. I was shocked and hurt and thought a lot about what it must have felt like for younger LGBTQ people who didn’t have a support system in place. I wrote a proposal for a project, called Youth Video OUTreach, to teach LGBTQ high school students documentary skills they could use to tell their stories about being out in high school. With a $10,000 grant from the Ohio Arts Council and in partnership with a local youth drop-in center, the university, and a contemporary art gallery on campus, we created a piece that helped start conversations at schools, community centers, film festivals, and campuses around the world. I was amazed by the honesty and courage of the nine student filmmakers. We were in a really different place in terms of inclusion of the LGBTQ community, even ten years ago, and the bravery of these students—their willingness to initiate honest, hard conversations about the right every student should have to feel safe at school—was inspiring. This model, collaborating across the academy and the community, is one that I return to often. Building partnerships that leverage the strengths of different communities is a powerful way to launch projects that are meaningful and long-lasting.

EDUCAUSE Review: Have you had to overcome hurdles as a woman in information technology? Do you still face obstacles in the profession?

Gjestvang: Ohio State’s central IT team has more female than male senior leaders, which is unusual. But yes, I have still struggled. My career started to take off just as my partner and I were trying to get pregnant and have kids—which was, as you can imagine, an involved process for us. Trying to increase my responsibilities at work during a time when I needed to give a lot of attention to my home life was hard. Looking back, I think that the pull I felt from both my work and my home life made me a better leader. I think it’s often the case that people who are passionate and committed at work are also people who are passionate and committed outside of work. And I believe in creating work environments to support this duality. When we take care of the people who work for us, not just as employees but as whole people with kids, parents, pets, homes, and communities, we not only support stronger and happier people but also create more engaged and healthy workplaces. I try to let myself be visible when I’m going for a run at lunch, or have to cancel meetings because I have a sick kid, or choose not to check email on vacation. These practices are critical to being the kind of person I want to be, and they are an important part of creating the kind of workplace I want to have.

EDUCAUSE Review: Whose leadership do you follow or admire the most, and why?

Gjestvang: I recently finished reading the book Just Mercy by Bryan Stevenson, and I am in complete awe of his compassion and commitment to his work. I
was inspired by reading not only about his tireless support of people wrongly imprisoned on death row but also about his generosity and sense of humanity. I also admire Brené Brown—in particular her work around vulnerability. And I’ve been lucky to work with leaders who have helped me grow throughout my career. Victoria Getis, now at Northwestern University, hired me and stood alongside me while she helped me learn the ropes in higher education. Joanne Dehoney gave me an early stretch project; her tireless leadership, irreverence, and humor were a total inspiration. Finally my current boss, Mike Hofherr, threw open the doors of opportunity and asked me to step through them even when I wasn’t totally sure I could do it. He has created possibilities for Ohio State and for so many people here; I am remarkably grateful to have him and his vision, candor, and friendship in my life.

**EDUCAUSE Review:** What are your goals for the future? Where do you see yourself in five to ten years?

**Gjestvang:** There’s a lot more I’d like to achieve in my current role, but I am also interested in thinking more about leadership and how to build engaged, high-performing teams. We spend so much of our lives at work, and as long as this is the case, I think work should be a place where we get to be our best selves. I’d like to explore ways to create environments that give us the space to grow as professionals and also offer us the time we need to be fulfilled as parents, partners, friends, activists, community members, and more.

**EDUCAUSE Review:** What advice would you give to other “rising” leaders?

**Gjestvang:** Find work that inspires you, and find a workplace that will help you grow. Think about how you can bring kindness and humanity to the people around you and to the work that you do every day. Look for the things you can do to support the most important successes for your team. Then focus on those things and try to let the less important stuff fall away. Find collaborators, ask for help, and if you have a chance to try something new, unfamiliar, or hard, do it. Being successful will not come from knowing exactly how to do it before you start but, rather, from allowing yourself to try. You will learn as you go. Look for opportunities, find partners, and get started.