“See You at EDUCAUSE!”

You may be reading this online in any of the 40-plus countries from which EDUCAUSE members hail, or you may have paused on this page while leafing through the EDUCAUSE Review print magazine shared on-site at the 2017 EDUCAUSE Annual Conference in Philadelphia. If you're at the conference in person, you're no doubt enjoying the powerful sense of community that makes EDUCAUSE so unique. If you couldn't attend the meeting this year, you'll see many of the conference's most important conversations and insights discussed in subsequent issues of EDUCAUSE Review and elsewhere on the EDUCAUSE website.

All kinds of magic happen when we bring together so many professionals to revel in what is, every year, the best thinking in higher education information technology. We're a vibrant, thriving community: we have common challenges and common opportunities, and we are committed to the common good. We speak a common language and share numerous perspectives. However, what I love most is not our single-mindedness but the sheer variety of these perspectives, challenges, opportunities, solutions, and institution types—and the strong voices from our community's exceptionally talented leaders. These voices are exemplified by the 2017 EDUCAUSE Award winners: Susan Metros (Leadership Award), Mark Bruhn (Community Leadership Award), and Liv Gjestvang (Rising Star Award). You can learn more about the winners in this issue of EDUCAUSE Review and through their presentations at the annual meeting.

To further expand and enhance diversity, earlier this year we sought and received a grant to advance our capacity to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI)—and to better position the association for providing effective resources to campuses engaged in the same crucial work. Last August, we convened an expert panel of leaders in our community to make recommendations about DEI and help us better understand what EDUCAUSE can do to make a difference. This particular era in history, when incivility and outrage appear to be spreading throughout the world, is an ideal time to focus on conveying a sense of inclusion. At this year's conference, I hope you will benefit from this intentional focus, whether you enjoy the different perspectives of our keynote speakers or attend some of the 25-plus sessions touching on DEI themes such as accessibility, data ethics, and unconscious bias.

Also this year, we have worked to broaden the circle of interest and influence for technology leaders. We believe that the future of the IT profession lies in IT leaders and staff having more conversations with non-IT colleagues. Technology leaders of today and tomorrow increasingly must connect in meaningful ways across divisions, units, and C-suite colleagues. To this end, at this year's conference we are welcoming 32 ACAO Digital Fellows: provosts and chief academic officers who have been selected by the Association of Chief Academic Officers to come to our conference, share their perspectives, and join our conversations. Including these exceptional academic leaders in our conference programing is an excellent capstone to a year-round exchange of ideas through the Leading Academic Transformation (LAT) community we began two years ago. In addition, attendees of the LAT community meeting will have the chance to identify areas of common interest and engage in deeper conversations around leading academic transformation.

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Beyond the conference, you’ll see a similar emphasis at other EDUCAUSE events. For example, at our annual Enterprise IT Summit in March 2018, our partnership with the National Association of College and University Business Officers (NACUBO) will be expanded to a triple partnership among EDUCAUSE, NACUBO, and the Association for Institutional Research (AIR). In September 2017, Christine Keller, executive director and CEO of AIR, and I shared a keynote at the 2017 Achieving the Dream Data & Analytics Symposium, where we talked about building stronger collaboration between IT and IR professionals. I have also been part of the Association of Governing Board (AGB) newly convened Innovation Task Force to develop a comprehensive statement, for presidents and trustees, that will include technology-related innovations and transformation for colleges and universities. By connecting the dots and bringing more people into conversations about the role of information technology in the future of higher education, we are amplifying the impact of the IT profession.

Whenever I hear EDUCAUSE members ask each other “Are you going to EDUCAUSE this year?” or exclaim “See you at EDUCAUSE!” I experience a complicated reaction. Certainly, this event is our premier opportunity to share insights, discuss innovations, and lend our collective strength for the common good. But EDUCAUSE is not just a conference. EDUCAUSE is a vibrant and diverse community, with a wonderful depth and breadth and an unwavering commitment to the common good.

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