Higher Education Information Security Council (HEISC) Charter

The Higher Education Information Security Council (HEISC), formerly the Computer and Network Security Task Force, was established in July 2000 to provide coordination for the higher education sector. In 2002, funded by an NSF award, EDUCAUSE hosted a series of four top-level workshops on different aspects of IT security in higher education and worked closely with staff from the White House and the President’s Critical Infrastructure Protection Board to develop the report “Higher Education Contribution to the National Strategy to Secure Cyberspace.”

What Makes HEISC Different?

The collaborative nature of HEISC reflects the higher education community in general. The higher education volunteers who contribute their time and efforts to addressing information security and privacy issues in higher education do so for the common good. That is, by working together, the entire higher education sector benefits. These collaborative efforts have led to:

- **The annual Security Professionals Conference (established 2003):** This is the only conference that provides community dialogue and professional development activities for higher education information security and privacy professionals.

- **Information Security Guide (established 2003):** The guide is a key resource for information security and privacy issues in higher education, updated with hot topics and helpful toolkits, maintained by higher education information security and privacy volunteers.

- **Awareness efforts:** HEISC has participated in National Cyber Security Awareness Month (NCSAM) activities since 2004 and in Data Privacy Day (DPD) activities since 2012; HEISC has also engaged in numerous other information security awareness activities.

- **Information-sharing opportunities:** Information security and privacy practitioners have the opportunity to engage with other members of the community through a Security Discussion list with more than 3,200 subscribers and a Privacy Discussion list created in late 2015.

- **Professional development, publication, and networking opportunities:** HEISC has offered over a decade of professional development, publication (through EDUCAUSE Review, the Security Matters blog column, the EDUCAUSE Library, and in collaborative papers created with other EDUCAUSE programs), and peer networking opportunities for CISOs, CPOs, security practitioners, and privacy professionals, including seminars and boot camps, webinars and virtual events, topical working groups, and the conference program committee.

HEISC volunteers include CISOs, CIOs, CPOs, and other security or privacy professionals and practitioners in the higher education community.
Vision
HEISC will guide and inform academic institutions in their quest to reduce risk; safeguard data, information systems, and networks; protect the privacy of the higher education community; and ensure that information security is an integral part of campus activities and business processes.

Mission
The HEISC mission is to support higher education institutions as they improve information security governance, compliance, data protection, and privacy programs. HEISC accomplishes this work through volunteer groups supported by professional EDUCAUSE staff, as well as collaborations with other organizations that address information security and privacy in higher education. HEISC actively develops and promotes information security leadership, awareness, and understanding; effective practices and policies; and guidance for the protection of higher education data, IT assets, and infrastructure. HEISC focuses on four major activities: (1) revising and refining the HEISC Information Security Guide; (2) coordinating the Security Professionals Conference and other awareness events; (3) providing effective practices and guidance; and (4) fostering communication and networking within the community.

Membership
HEISC is a volunteer effort open to all higher education information security, privacy, and other IT professionals. The HEISC Advisory Committee is responsible for ensuring progress in meeting the strategic priorities of the council. To accomplish this, the committee creates and monitors working groups and sponsors other activities, annually reviews the strategic priorities to see if changes are needed, and annually sets objectives for the working groups that will produce tangible outcomes that further the goals of the council and the EDUCAUSE Cybersecurity Initiative.

The advisory committee includes the council’s co-chairs (CIOs); working group co-chairs (typically CISOs and CPOs); Security Professionals Conference program chair and vice chair (CISOs); and staff liaisons from EDUCAUSE, Internet2, and the REN-ISAC. Past co-chairs of the council may continue as ex officio members of the committee.

EDUCAUSE Role
EDUCAUSE engages the HEISC Advisory Committee on a regular basis to identify and obtain the resources needed to accomplish the goals of the council, including recruiting human resources; developing and implementing strategies to engage higher education institutional leadership, association executive leadership, and corporate leadership in furthering the goals of the council; ensuring effective communication and collaboration with Internet2 and REN-ISAC working groups; and periodically assessing the functioning of the council and, when appropriate, overseeing the change process. Additional collaborations and joint activities often occur between HEISC and other EDUCAUSE groups or programs.
HEISC Organizational Chart

HEISC Advisory Committee
- Chairs serve two-year terms.
- The following roles serve on the advisory committee: council co-chairs, working group co-chairs, conference program chairs, and EDUCAUSE, Internet2, and REN-ISAC staff liaisons.
- Members serve for the length of their appointed role.

Standing Working Groups
- Chairs serve two- or three-year terms.
- Members serve two- or three-year terms, with the option to renew membership at the end of a term.
- Yearly outputs vary due to HEISC strategic priorities.
- Working group membership guidelines, as well as volunteer CPE guidelines, are available at www.educause.edu/heiuc.

Not in Scope

HEISC includes information security and privacy professionals at higher education institutions, as well as collaborations with professionals from other organizations that address information security and privacy in higher education. Despite its wide range of expertise, HEISC deliberately chooses not to engage in some activities at this time. These activities include:

- Developing or brokering information security fee-based services or tools
- Formally approving, recommending, or endorsing information security products
- Creating technical training materials
- Participating in information sharing and analysis of operational issues

Temporary project teams may be created to address time-sensitive deliverables that require no more than 6-12 months for development. Volunteers may be selected from existing working groups or from outside HEISC.