Executive Summary

EDUCAUSE President and CEO John O’Brien convened the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task Force in the first half of 2018 to help the association craft concrete actions in a number of specific areas to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in EDUCAUSE priorities, programs, and services for members and for the field. The Task Force reviewed EDUCAUSE DEI plans and activities in the context of peer association benchmarks and provided feedback on specific operational areas. It endorsed a position statement to represent the association’s commitment to DEI, as well as a personal commitment statement that institutional IT leaders will be able to sign. Finally, the Task Force put forth ten recommendations to EDUCAUSE leadership that, taken together, will elevate attention to DEI as a critical and strategic issue for EDUCAUSE members, substantively improve the capacity of the higher education technology community to engage and foster change in this critical area, and ultimately increase the diversity and inclusiveness of our community:

1. Prominently post and publicize an EDUCAUSE statement on diversity, equity, and inclusion.

2. Host and publicize a personal commitment statement that senior-most college and university IT leaders can support to foster attention and community around DEI.

3. Create and maintain an information hub for people to learn initial DEI concepts that includes high-quality resources for developing inclusive, diverse, and successful organizations.

4. Leverage the constituent group model to create affinity groups for additional demographic categories (e.g., Latinx professionals).

5. Increase access to mentoring opportunities to (a) connect members of underrepresented groups with mentors to provide support and guidance, and (b) connect colleagues who wish to build inclusive and diverse teams or work more effectively in diverse settings.

6. Offer leadership development opportunities (e.g., convenings, workshops, or targeted programming at the annual conference) specifically designed for underrepresented groups.

7. Develop and execute a strategy to engage corporate partners in the conversation about DEI.
8. Develop peer association relationships, programming, and resources specifically for the purpose of helping the higher education technology community cultivate allies among campus colleagues and partner effectively as institutional DEI leaders.

9. Create a standing DEI advisory committee.

10. Create a time-limited DEI staff position at the director level or above to operationalize and execute against the recommendations of the Task Force.

**Introduction**

EDUCAUSE President and CEO John O’Brien convened the [Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task Force](#) in the first half of 2018 to help the association craft concrete actions in a number of specific areas to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in EDUCAUSE priorities, programs, and services for members and for the field.

O’Brien charged the group to:

1. Develop and endorse a public-facing statement emphasizing the critical importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion to the EDUCAUSE community

2. Recommend specific strategies to advance diversity in the EDUCAUSE community and within the leadership pipeline

3. Create recommendations for following up the work of the Task Force

For the period that it met, the Task Force also served in the additional capacity as an advisory group for the association. O’Brien asked the group to:

4. Provide feedback and advice on a variety of 2018 EDUCAUSE activities related to DEI, including current DEI priorities in the research and professional learning portfolios

In a series of six meetings over the course of 2018, the Task Force first reviewed the current status of EDUCAUSE activities related to diversity, equity, and inclusion and explored peer association approaches to DEI before addressing each section of the charge sequentially. This report summarizes the findings, recommendations, and suggestions of the group.
Findings

The Task Force generally concurs with the approach EDUCAUSE has adopted—to elevate DEI by weaving related content and formal learning opportunities into its program channels (e.g., conferences and events, institutes, research, *EDUCAUSE Review*, badging program). The Task Force strongly endorses work in the DEI space that the association has already launched and encourages EDUCAUSE to continue or increase activities that will elevate DEI awareness and capacity, such as:

- **Improving the breadth and quality of demographic data** EDUCAUSE has about the diversity of its membership so that the association can better understand the experiences and needs of underrepresented groups as well as model and track changes in the makeup of its membership and community. Without these data, it is impossible to understand the dimensions of the DEI challenges that members and the association face or to track progress.

- Anchoring the **management and leadership institute curricula** with DEI topics at levels appropriate to the audiences served.

- Providing **online and face-to-face learning opportunities** covering DEI topics in the ELive! portfolio and at conferences (e.g., managing, leading, and working well across generations; anti-bias training; terminology fluency).

- **Building on the workforce study** to provide insight into the experiences of underrepresented members of our community, the impact of DEI initiatives at the unit and institutional level, and the challenges members of our community are experiencing promoting DEI at their institutions.

- **Targeting age diversity** for the association by actively encouraging participation by young professionals. Not only are Millennials and younger generations more demographically diverse than their older colleagues, they also value inclusive and diverse organizations more highly. Younger leaders will add compelling stories, perspectives, and approaches to the DEI conversation.

- Leveraging the association’s developing capacity to **personalize communications** to (a) raise DEI awareness, for example by using social media to link to the larger cultural climate, and (b) connect new members to their interest communities in onboarding.

- **Continuing to develop relationships** and look for opportunities to share the expertise of partner associations, including, for example, *CUPA-HR*, *NCWIT*, *I2*, *AASCU*, *NASPA*, *ACE*, *NSBE*, *AISES*, *SWE*, *SHPE*, *CMDIT*, and *Systers*. 
The group also agreed that the Task Force and its charge were timely and appropriate activities for the association and that EDUCAUSE could learn from its peer associations, many of which have established specific programs to promote and increase diversity and inclusion.

Within this context, the Task Force identified ten recommendations for actions the association could take to support underrepresented members of the EDUCAUSE community and help the higher education technology community build capability to promote DEI in their own environments. The recommendations are organized below by the elements of the charge. The Task Force also provided suggestions in a number of areas at request of the staff or the board in the dual role it played during its tenure as a DEI advisory body for the association. The major advisory topics the group considered and their suggestions are summarized after the recommendations.

**Recommendations**

**CHARGE #1: Develop and endorse a public-facing statement emphasizing the critical importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion to the EDUCAUSE community**

To address the critical strategic importance of DEI for the association and for the community, EDUCAUSE requires a clear, easily discoverable statement of purpose on its website. The Task Force drafted such a statement. Additionally the group recommends that EDUCAUSE host a commitment statement that will allow members of the community to publicly avow their intention to materially promote diversity, equity, and inclusion within their own spheres of influence. Working from an initial draft created by Task Force member Raechelle Clemmons, the group created a commitment statement, subjected it to legal review by the firm Hogan Lovells, and additionally sought review from their institutional legal teams.

The Task Force recommends that EDUCAUSE:

1. Prominently post and publicize an association statement on diversity, equity, and inclusion.
2. Host and publicize a commitment statement that members of the CIO and VP IT community can personally support to foster attention and community around DEI.
CHARGE #2: Recommend specific strategies to advance diversity, inclusion, and belonging in the EDUCAUSE community and within the leadership pipeline

The Task Force offers the following additional recommendations for improving the diversity and inclusiveness of the EDUCAUSE community. The recommendations include those oriented toward building overall DEI awareness and capability in the EDUCAUSE community and others directed at recruiting, developing, and retaining individuals from underrepresented groups. To assist the association in strategic alignment, this set of recommendations is organized by EDUCAUSE strategic priority.

Personalization

3. Create and maintain an information hub for people to learn initial DEI concepts that includes high-quality resources for developing inclusive, diverse, and successful organizations.

4. Leverage the constituent group model to create affinity groups for demographic categories (see NASPA knowledge communities for an example). These opportunities to network and form community could signal the importance of diversity to the association, could potentially help recruit and seed volunteer leadership among currently underrepresented groups, and could be kicked off at the conference at modest expense.

Professional Learning

5. Increase access to mentoring opportunities to (a) connect members of underrepresented groups with mentors to provide support and guidance, and (b) connect colleagues who wish to build inclusive and diverse teams or work more effectively in diverse settings. Use a mix of approaches including traditional mentor-mentee engagements as well as speed mentoring or online chat mentoring, etc. Recognize that mentoring is multidirectional—younger professionals have something to offer their more seasoned allies, and members of underrepresented groups may benefit through connections with each other and through connections with nonminority allies.

6. Offer leadership development opportunities (e.g., convenings, workshops) specifically designed for underrepresented groups. For example, many
disciplinary associations in the higher education space have conferences or other programming aimed at helping women grow within leadership roles (see, for example, ACUI Women’s Leadership Institute, ACPA Women’s Leadership Institute, NASPA Women’s Leadership Institute, and ACE Women’s Network).

**Partnerships**

7. Develop and execute a strategy to engage corporate partners in the conversation about DEI. Amplify their best practices for recruiting and managing diverse teams. Be sure corporate members are aware of the EDUCAUSE DEI priority and the code of conduct, and identify vendor advocates that can bring additional DEI perspectives and strategies to institutional members.

8. Develop peer association relationships, programming, and resources specifically for the purpose of helping the higher education technology community cultivate allies among campus colleagues and partner effectively as institutional DEI leaders.

**CHARGE #3: Create recommendations for following up the work of the Task Force**

To implement and further the work of the Task Force, the group recommends that EDUCAUSE:

9. Create a standing DEI advisory committee to track activities and progress against the recommendations in this report, to support association efforts with feedback as requested, and to serve as advocates for DEI in the EDUCAUSE and higher education communities. An ex officio board representative would be appropriate for this advisory body.

10. Create a time-limited DEI staff position at the director level or above to operationalize and execute against the recommendations of the Task Force, to serve as a DEI spokesperson and advocate for the association and community, and to help integrate DEI into work across the association.

The Task Force noted the importance of international perspectives within the EDUCAUSE community as well as the opportunity for EDUCAUSE and its members to promote and support colleagues in developing countries. The group supports EDUCAUSE activities undertaken elsewhere to better refine the association’s international strategy.
Feedback and Advice

CHARGE #4: Provide feedback and advice on a variety of 2018 EDUCAUSE activities related to DEI, including current DEI priorities in the research and professional learning portfolios

In its advisory capacity, the Task Force considered a number of foundational topics to provide suggestions and advice in areas where work has started within EDUCAUSE. Members of the Task Force directly advised the research team in their efforts to expand the utility of the ECAR Workforce Study in tracking the influence and impact of diversity initiatives on members and higher IT personnel generally. The Task Force also deliberated and provided helpful guidance on three specific operational issues with long-term implications for the association’s DEI efforts: event location selection considerations, DEI impact evaluation, and communicating and highlighting DEI and the work of the Task Force with the community. These are summarized below.

Event Location Considerations

At the request of the EDUCAUSE Board, the Task Force reviewed the association’s approach for demonstrating its commitment to DEI in event location selection. The Task Force applauded EDUCAUSE operations for its attention to this matter and for incorporating a Force Majeure clause in its event contracts to signal the importance of inclusivity and to provide some recourse should the location become less welcoming to all members after the contract is established. The Task Force suggested that in addition to the Force Majeure clause, EDUCAUSE could adopt and publish a public statement outlining its commitment to host events in locations where all members of its community can feel included, valued, and safe. The Task Force endorses the following statement:

EDUCAUSE strives for its events to be inclusive, welcoming, and safe for all attendees. We make every effort to locate events in cities and states that protect the rights of all members of our community and share the EDUCAUSE commitment to promote diversity and inclusiveness. Event planning for EDUCAUSE is complicated by the fact that location decisions can be made ten years prior to the event. When circumstances change too late to relocate an event, EDUCAUSE will develop appropriate communications, responses, and mitigations to assure that all members of its community remain valued and informed.
Evaluating EDUCAUSE DEI Programming

The Task Force considered how best to evaluate the impact and success of EDUCAUSE DEI programming. As noted at the beginning of the report, the Task Force supports evaluation-related efforts the association has under way, including in particular (a) improving its information about member demographics so that change may be observed and (b) expanding the Workforce Study to provide a more detailed view into the state of diversity, equity, and inclusion in the higher education IT workforce. Both these areas of effort are critical to the association’s ability to monitor and evaluate its DEI activities and the diversity of its community.

The Task Force recognized that cultural and socioeconomic forces at every level influence the personal experiences of individuals and the shape of the IT workforce at institutions and overall. The group observed that within this broader context, it would be difficult if not impossible to attribute progress in the diversity, equity, and inclusion of higher education IT to EDUCAUSE activities. Even within the community of EDUCAUSE participants, progress toward DEI will be strongly mediated by cultural context. Therefore, the Task Force suggests that EDUCAUSE focus its evaluation efforts primarily on direct formative assessment of EDUCAUSE programming, including uptake, the member experience, and member perceptions of quality and usefulness. Specific goals that the group suggests EDUCAUSE evaluate against include the following:

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| Participants of different identity groups feel equally welcomed, included in, and satisfied with EDUCAUSE events and programs. | • Routine items on surveys following events and professional learning offerings, exploring inclusion experience and satisfaction of respondents  
• Data on the diversity of session panels, CFP respondents, speakers, board, volunteer committees, and event registrants |
| Community engagement with DEI as an issue and DEI program offerings increases over time. | • The number of signatories to the CIO Commitment Statement  
• The number of DEI badge earners and displayers  
• Uptake of DEI-related stickers  
• Participation in related professional learning offerings (e.g., ELive! events, conference sessions)  
• Social/Google analytics on content consumption |
| DEI content resources provide effective support. | • Usability testing  
• Social/Google analytics  
• Personalized email follow-ups to users |
| EDUCAUSE leadership programming has a positive impact on the career pathways of participants from underrepresented groups. | • Career progressions of leadership programming graduates  
• Self-reports of participants |
Communication

The Task Force recognized that it is a springboard for bringing attention to DEI and for launching conversations and next steps, with the 2018 EDUCAUSE Annual Conference as a ready opportunity to capitalize on the work of group. It suggested that EDUCAUSE publicize the report of the Task Force among EDUCAUSE communities in advance of the annual conference and then create venues at the annual conference for discussing the report and for engaging with colleagues about diversity, equity, and inclusion. The group also suggested that EDUCAUSE promote the CIO Commitment Statement at the annual meeting (including, for example, a mechanism for signing and a lapel pin for signatories). Finally, the Task Force emphasized the importance of establishing a routine cycle of publicizing progress and engagement with DEI through EDUCAUSE Review and other channels to keep attention and energy flowing toward DEI matters.

General Conclusions

The 2018 EDUCAUSE Task Force on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion met throughout the first half of 2018 in order to review the association’s ongoing DEI efforts and craft recommendations for future organizational actions, communications, and programming. In response to charges set forth by EDUCAUSE president and CEO John O’Brien, the Task Force has developed ten recommendations outlined above to continue prioritizing DEI in areas ranging from content resources to multifaceted investments in professional learning to build the diversity of the membership and the field. The group also developed a set of statements for public-facing release affirming the association’s commitment to DEI. Moving forward, the Task Force recommends that EDUCAUSE form a standing DEI advisory committee and add staffing to ensure progress in the areas outlined in this report.
Appendix A

The Task Force modeled a DEI information hub that will be helpful to the EDUCAUSE community. Suggested resources include the following:

Learning resources for:

- Members of underrepresented groups, including suggestions for how to respond to bias and microaggressions, as well as pointers to relevant professional learning opportunities.
- DEI advocates at beginning, intermediate, and advanced levels, covering making the case, benchmarking, how get started, action plans, and success metrics.

Specific support for recruitment and retention of diverse candidates, including:

- Places to reach diverse candidates
- Job description and hiring best practices guides (e.g., inclusive language use)
- Management and communication best practices for working with diverse teams

Links to relevant external resources such as:

- [Resources](https://www.educause.edu) from the National Center for Women & Information Technology
- [Diversity Jobs](https://www.diversityjobs.com)
- [Diversity](https://www.diversity.com)
- [Women for Hire](https://www.womenforhire.com)
- [Hire Diversity](https://www.hirediversity.com)
- [GlobalMindED](https://www.globalminded.org)
- [DiversityFIRST Toolkit](https://diversityfirst.org)
- [National Diversity Council](https://www.nationaldiversitycouncil.org)
- [Textio](https://www.textio.com)

About EDUCAUSE

EDUCAUSE is a nonprofit association and the foremost community of IT leaders and professionals committed to advancing higher education. EDUCAUSE programs and services are focused on analysis, advocacy, community building, professional development, and knowledge creation because IT plays a transformative role in higher education. EDUCAUSE supports those who lead, manage, and use information technology through a comprehensive range of resources and activities. For more information, visit [educause.edu](https://www.educause.edu).

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