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## Minutes of the Regular Session of the EDUCAUSE Board

*Tuesday and Wednesday, June 22–23, 2021, Virtual*

*Note: All times listed are Eastern time (ET).*

### Attendance

**Board members:** Elias Eldayrie (Treasurer), Keith McIntosh (Vice Chair), Tony Moore, Helen Norris, John O'Brien (President and CEO; *ex officio*), Amelia Parnell, Sharon Pitt, Mark Roman, Celeste Schwartz, Carol Smith, Jennifer Sparrow (Secretary), Cheryl Washington, Sue Workman (Chair)

**Staff:** Eden Dahlstrom, Susan Grajek, Mairéad Martin, Nicole McWhirter, Catherine Yang, Karen Mateer

**Invited Guests:** Alex Alavi, EDUCAUSE (Tuesday); Pekka Kähkipuro, EUNIS Board of Directors (Wednesday)

### Tuesday, June 22, 2021

#### Call to Order / Review Agenda

Board chair Sue Workman called the meeting to order at 1:04 p.m. and briefly reviewed the agenda topics for the meeting.

#### Consent Agenda

Workman reviewed the two items on the consent agenda: 1) acceptance of the 2020 audit report; and 2) approval of the Form 990 for 2020.

*Jennifer Sparrow moved to approve the consent agenda. Mark Roman seconded. The motion was approved.*

#### Board Committee Updates

Audit Committee chair Amelia Parnell reported on the committee's meeting with Clifton Allen Larson to accept the 2020 financial statements and thanked EDUCAUSE staff involved in the audit for their great work. In addition, she shared, the committee reviewed and endorsed the 2020 Form 990 and reviewed progress on the association's enterprise risk register.

Governance Committee chair Keith McIntosh gave an overview of the committee's meeting with Nominations and Leadership Development Committee chair Tracy Schroeder and shared

that a subset of four candidates was selected for consideration by the board. More details on the candidates and time for discussion is scheduled for Day 2 of the board meeting.

McIntosh, board liaison to the DEI Advisory Committee, and Vice President of Digital Communication and Content Catherine Yang, staff liaison to the committee, provided a brief overview of committee's work and shared that the committee is focused on expanding DEI work already undertaken by EDUCAUSE. Yang will provide an in-depth report of this on Day 2 of the meeting.

Finance/Investment Committee chair Elias Eldayrie reported on the committee's review of the association's investment portfolio, which has produced better-than-expected returns. The association's reserves are healthy, and Eldayrie gave credit to President and CEO John O'Brien and the EDUCAUSE executive team for maintaining financial stability through the pandemic. The committee encourages a conservative approach regarding the reserve balance.

O'Brien cited the outstanding work and progress seen with the board committees, which are much more active than they have been in the past. He credited the work of Nicole McWhirter, Chief Planning Office for EDUCAUSE, in building the infrastructure and providing invaluable leadership.

## **Trimester Financial Review**

O'Brien provided an overview of the financial health of the association, sharing that current net income is above what was budgeted. This is due primarily to forgiveness of the first Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan, better-than-expected performance of our investments, and reductions in spending. Event registrations on balance have exceeded expectations as well, and O'Brien highlighted the success of the online Institute programs. He then introduced Controller Alex Alavi, who went into more detail regarding the organization's response to the pandemic, including efforts to decrease expenses and identify new revenue opportunities. He reviewed one-time funding that the association capitalized on, including two PPP loans totaling \$3.3M and employee retention credits in the amount of \$475K. Our diversified investment holdings yielded favorable returns, which helped with the uncertain financial picture last year, and Alavi has great confidence in our investment advisors. Alavi went on to review the reserves balance, presenting three scenarios for future reserve levels.

## **E21 Update**

Vice President of Professional Development Eden Dahlstrom provided an update on current planning for the annual conference. She started with a review of the risk assessment categories that have been tracked since January, which showed, at the time of the meeting, almost all categories at either low or no-risk for holding a face-to-face event. With no current social distance requirements or attendance limits at the venue in Philadelphia, things are moving

forward and plans for the on-site event will be finalized in July. She went on to explain that the annual conference will consist of two distinct events—an in-person event and an online event—and shared an overview of the key features of each experience. Participants attending on-site in Philadelphia will be expected to follow local COVID protocols at the time of the event. The ensuing board discussion focused on questions regarding corporate engagement and plans for the exhibit hall. Dahlstrom noted layout adjustments are being made to accommodate directional traffic and additional physical space for vendors. Likewise, other conference spaces are being designed for more space to accommodate participants' various comfort levels. For the online conference, we will use the same platform used for the 2020 annual conference, incorporating improvements that have been discovered through our producing virtual events during the last year. The board expressed their full confidence in the EDUCAUSE team and shared their excitement and delight about getting together safely in Philadelphia.

## **CourseGateway Overview**

Vice President of Partnerships, Research, and Communities Susan Grajek presented an overview of the CourseGateway project, a grant-funded initiative supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. CourseGateway is a consumer-friendly site to help educators make informed decisions about selecting courseware. The goals of the initiative are to close equity gaps in course completion rates for Black, LatinX, and Indigenous students and students who are experiencing poverty, while increasing both institutional and student return on investment through greater efficiency and student retention. In addition to being a decision-support tool, Grajek added that CourseGateway is also intended to help shape the market and increase the quality of courseware developed. Grajek recognized board member Celeste Schwartz, who served on the product development board for CourseGateway and who provided comments on her experience with the evaluations she had been part of. Grajek shared a timeline for the development of the CourseGateway, which is currently a minimum viable product, and the deliverables associated with the project. She also described an additional project funded by the Foundation, a planning grant for (1) developing a decision-support tool similar to CourseGateway, but for advising technologies and (2) designing a potential “decision support environment” that could provide an entry point for both products as well as new products, and/or existing products already offered by EDUCAUSE, such as CDS, the Learning Space Rating System, HECVAT, etc. The board expressed excitement about this new opportunity and optimism for what it means for EDUCAUSE going forward. Conversations centered around the potential shift this may have on existing services and the long-term business model needed to sustain and expand services like CourseGateway. Grajek shared that this is a natural evolution in the continued maturation of existing data services and that something similar was already on the product roadmap for CDS. As far as sustainability of the CourseGateway and other potential

decision support products, Grajek added that EDUCAUSE is working with Tyton Partners to answer these types of questions.

## **Questions about Any Items in Written Materials**

John asked the board if there were any questions or comments about information provided in the written materials. Cheryl Washington highlighted the excellent professional development opportunities, expressing her appreciation for both the development of new programs and the rapid shift to offering everything online, making programming more accessible to a wider audience. She also spoke highly of the partnership of EDUCAUSE with GrayCastle Security in launching the Vendor Risk Assessment program. Helen Norris noted the growth in membership and O'Brien shared that membership renewals continue to be better than expected. In response to a question about early adopters for the community platform, Vice President and CIO Mairéad Martin reported that there are 14 Community Groups who are interested in being early adopters. She added that the community platform will be open to EDUCAUSE members and non-EDUCAUSE members who have a profile record. A marketing campaign will be done to inform people of this requirement and encourage them to create a profile if they don't have one. Martin added that the platform will be called "Connect." Mark Roman commented positively on the content produced by EDUCAUSE and asked about how many people the content reaches. Yang shared that the annual total reach is in the range of 8 to 10 million impressions across all channels, and while this is not deduped, that number would safely be in the millions.

## **Adjourn Regular Meeting**

The regular meeting was adjourned at 4:17 p.m.

## **Executive Session**

The board entered executive session at 4:20 p.m. and adjourned at 5:15 p.m.

**Wednesday, June 23, 2021**

## **Review Agenda**

Workman convened the meeting at 10:32 am ET reviewed the agenda for the day, including calling out the special guest and optional discussion at the end of the day.

## **International Perspective**

O'Brien introduced Pekka Kahkipuro, CIO at Brunel University in London, and vice president of the board of directors of EUNIS, who provided an overview of various programs currently under way in Europe, including the European Universities initiative, the Digital Education Plan, and other research initiatives. He also highlighted several initiatives at the national level to provide digital education and national mobility and flexible learning programs. He commented that the pandemic had the effect of forcing institutions to return to their core missions, and spurred growth in the areas of continuing education, apprenticeship opportunities, as well as a change in the research focus. It also encouraged an emphasis on international cooperation and industrial partnerships. After concluding his presentation, Kahkipuro engaged in dialogue with the board. Topics ranged from the continued impact of GDPR and data privacy, the heightened priority around cybersecurity, the move to hybrid everything, and the positive shift in attitude toward embracing technology for teaching.

## **Presentation of Board Nominees and Slate Selection**

McIntosh acknowledged the Nominations and Leadership Development Committee members, who do the lion's share of the work involved in selecting the semi-finalists presented to the Governance Committee. He singled out the leadership of committee chair Tracy Schroeder, who is a former board member and chair, as well as EDUCAUSE staff liaisons McWhirter and Karen Mateer.

McIntosh gave a brief demographic overview of the entire candidate pool for this year's board election, then provided the same demographic view for the eight semi-finalists recommended by the committee. He also presented current board demographics of the current board as compared to EDCAUSE membership, making note of areas of where there is over- or under-representation on the board. Following a review of the selection process and a discussion and deliberation on the candidates presented for the board's consideration, the board selected 4 candidates to appear on the ballot for the 2021 election.

*Carol Smith moved to approve the individuals selected as finalists for the 2020 EDUCAUSE board election. Mark Roman seconded. The motion was approved.*

## **DEI Discussion**

O'Brien introduced the discussion on DEI, which grew out of a parking lot item from the March 2021 board meeting. Yang acknowledged board members McIntosh, Cheryl Washington, and Sharon Pitt for their service on the DEI Task Force, which provided the foundation for the association's DEI work. She provided an overview of both the internal and external DEI focused work that had been completed thus far. Yang also shared how DEI has been integrated into the

yearly planning process, and specifically noted the intentionality behind expanding the diversity of general session and featured speakers at conferences, and the work directed at meeting accessibility-related needs of members. Yang then shifted to looking ahead, sharing that DEI activities going forward will focus on content and programming, including how to apply DEI principles at your institution, and weaving together the work of various EDUCAUSE communities, committees, and social media. Plans include the development of a DEI journey map; a CIO commitment toolkit; and a DEI hiring infographic based on the hiring roadmap created by the DEI Advisory Committee. In the leadership and career development areas, we are in the final stages of establishing a professional pipeline student scholarship for the EDUCAUSE 2021 Annual Conference and are lending support to the Next Leaders Fellowship Program being developed by Michael Cato, CIO at Bowdoin College. The ensuing discussion included support for the more action-oriented approach, especially the expansion of outreach to non-CIO IT staff. In response to a question about DEI-related content at the annual conference, Yang reported that the agenda is not finalized yet, but there are several proposals with a DEI focus, and there will be a session provided by ARiA that will feature anti-racism curriculum. O'Brien concluded by reaffirming DEI as an important commitment and shared that he will continue provide regular progress reports to the board. Workman thanked Yang for her presentation and offered support from the board for this initiative.

## **Round Robin**

The meeting concluded with a round robin, with each participant commenting on something they learned or want to explore further following the days' meetings. There was uniform enthusiasm about the prospect of seeing each other and our members at the conference in Philadelphia, as well as excitement and support for the action around DEI. O'Brien also announced the recipients of the 2021 EDUCAUSE Award winners who will be announced publicly in September.

## **Adjourn**

Chair Workman thanked participants for a productive meeting and adjourned the meeting at 2:14 pm ET.