National Science Board Members:

EDUCAUSE, an international, nonprofit association representing over 1,800 colleges and universities that seek to transform education through the intelligent use of information technology, commends your efforts to initiate a public dialogue on the current state and future direction of our nation’s science and engineering infrastructure. It is imperative that academic researchers, encompassing all levels and a wide-range of science and engineering disciplines, have increased access to a robust infrastructure if we are to maintain a world leadership role in science and engineering.

The National Science Board’s recommendations reflect the EDUCAUSE community’s goal of utilizing a robust infrastructure to meet this century’s evolving education and research needs. The National Science Foundation played a critical role in assisting the building of advanced networks, and supported initial managerial activities at a critical development of their start-up. While recognizing that network building is not the agency’s mission today, continued support of programs such as EPSCoR and funding new academic research network infrastructure projects will help the NSF meet its primary goal of advancing research development in this country.

Higher education institutions recognize their obligation to pay their fair share of all research-related expenses, including infrastructure costs. However, while self-reliance is important, the reality of an unpredictable economy and lack of opportunities for nongovernmental funding make sustaining critical research projects next to impossible without consistent government investment. Increased NSF funding of advanced networks will enhance the higher education community’s ability to expand and maintain public access to high-speed networks.

EDUCAUSE again expresses its appreciation for your hard work. We are available as an information resource and look forward to working with the National Science Board on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Brian Hawkins, President
EDUCAUSE