



Mission, Goals and Objectives, and Strategies

Mission

The mission of the National Learning Infrastructure Initiative (NLII) is to create new collegiate learning environments that harness the power of information technology to improve the quality of teaching and learning, contain or reduce rising costs, and provide greater access to higher education.

Goals and Objectives

- To inspire, by promulgating a vision of a National Learning Infrastructure, by projecting its characteristics and capabilities, and by devising strategies to make it a reality.
- To influence, by advocating principles, guidelines, and positions that are strategic in nature and address the behavioral, social, cultural, and economic processes and structures that both enable and constrain the development of a National Learning Infrastructure.
- To leverage, by harnessing federal, state, and corporate interest in creating a National Information Infrastructure in such a way as to realize a significant return on current and future investments in instructional applications of information technology.
- To enable, by creating a forum where those with common interests in using information technology to transform instruction on a national scale can collaborate in developing and implementing new learning products and new pedagogical methods.
- To inform, by identifying, endorsing, developing, and supporting demonstration projects (prototypes) that seek to advance the state of the art relative to a vision of a National Learning Infrastructure Organizational Strategy
- The National Learning Infrastructure Initiative is an activity sponsored by EDUCAUSE, whose role is to serve as a catalyst for bringing together the affected parties and creating joint solutions to the problems inhibiting the creation of a National Learning Infrastructure.
- The NLII carries out its work through a coalition of institutions and organizations that pay its assessed dues and actively engage in its program of work.
- Participating institutions and organizations designate one individual as their liaison to the NLII. Decisions about who participates in particular NLII meetings and activities are made by the participating institutions and organizations depending upon level of interest and involvement.
- The NLII Planning Committee, appointed by the EDUCAUSE Board, coordinates the development of the NLII and its activities.
- The Planning Committee charges and forms Working Groups to focus the attention of the NLII on specific areas or tasks in which collaborative thought, planning, and action are necessary to pursue

the mission of the NLII or to achieve its goals and objectives.

Thematic Strategy

The NLII focuses its activities on the themes of its six mission-critical issues.

- Enhancing Academic Productivity

The NLII conducts symposia and produces white papers to help our community understand how information technology can enhance academic productivity and to keep this issue squarely on the higher education agenda. The NLII works to identify and create examples of best practice that enhance academic productivity-prototypes of more-productive learning environments that are replicable and scalable.

- Developing Tools and Standards to Support New Learning Environments

New tools and standards are needed to enable the Internet to deliver high-quality learning materials, courses, and curricula and to structure and manage the instructional process when students, instructors, and learning resources are widely distributed. Programs such as the NLII's Instructional Management Systems (IMS) work to provide an infrastructure that facilitates the educational process.

- Advancing Our Understanding of the Virtual University

A growing body of evidence indicates that computer and communications technologies can expand access to learning resources and improve the educational experience regard-less of where and when that learning takes place. That same technology offers new opportunities for multi-institutional and multistate collaborations on the development and delivery of educational services to ease the financial burden that would otherwise be shouldered by institutions or states acting alone. This new vision for higher education is being called the virtual university.

- Creating a Market Structure for Development of Interactive Learning Materials

High-quality instructional software (learningware) is a necessary ingredient for producing more-productive learning environments, and a robust commercial market for interactive learning materials is needed.

- Providing Evidence of Viability of Concepts, including Outcomes Assessment and Cost/Benefit Analyses

Institutional leaders and policy makers are interested in developing comparisons of costs and benefits for various instructional delivery systems. Establishing comparative measures for success in technology-mediated learning environments -- including consideration of financial and nonfinancial factors -- is critical as institutions consider options for various kinds of programmatic initiatives.

- Articulating Those Public and Institutional Policy Issues That Inhibit the Creation of a National Learning Infrastructure

The rapid acceleration of developments in information technology and distributed learning is revolutionizing the way postsecondary education is organized and delivered not only in the United States

but also globally. Not coincidentally, those developments are occurring at precisely the same time that higher education in the United States is adapting to a more market-oriented, competitive, and consumer-focused environment. The combined effects of the new technology and a changing economy directly challenge many of the assumptions and foundations upon which states and systems of higher education have built their regulatory, organizational, and financial policies governing higher education.

Financial Strategy

- Participating institutions and organizations pay an annual membership fee of \$5,000. Those institutions and organizations are Sustaining Members of the NLII.
- NLII demonstration projects are funded through the collaborative efforts of the particular parties involved and may include in-kind contributions by the participants as well as federal, state, and private grants and investments.
- Facility, meal, and refreshment expenses that result from meetings of the NLII, the Planning Committee, and the Working Groups are recovered from member dues and sponsor contributions. Travel and housing expenses that result from such meetings are generally covered by the member institution or organization with which a given individual is associated.
- Travel and housing expenses of experts and other parties invited to NLII meetings and activities, in those cases in which such support is necessary to secure the participation of a key individual, also are recovered from member dues and sponsor contributions. Honoraria sometimes are provided for those invited experts and other parties who are not associated with a member institution or organization and who make significant contributions of time and effort.
- Institutions and organizations wishing to indicate their support for the NLII and to receive ongoing information about its efforts and activities pay an annual membership fee of \$100. These institutions and organizations are Members of the NLII.

We call on you to join us.

For more information or to join, please call 202-872-4200 or send e-mail to nlii@educause.edu.

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