

EDGECON RETURNS TO GLOWING REVIEWS

Edge's premier event, EdgeCon, returned on October 13, 2022 to bring together thought leaders from around the region to connect and collaborate, and discuss the challenges and opportunities facing the academic, healthcare, IT, and government sectors. Hosted on Edge member campus, Princeton University, this annual conference offered a full schedule of inspiring sessions and discussions, as well as a chance to network with peers and meet new members of the Edge community. Over 250 professionals attended the one-day event to discuss cutting-edge technology, digital learning, and future-forward strategies for supporting the modern higher education institution.



Recognizing Excellence

To shine a spotlight on the outstanding work and dedication of member institutions and celebrate the innovation happening throughout the region, Edge added Member Awards to this year's event.



Network Leadership Award

Michele Norin, Senior Vice President and Chief Information Officer, Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey. Rutgers University and Edge have been closely aligned from a network planning perspective since Edge's creation in early 2000. When Michelle Norin took leadership of Rutgers University's Office of Information Technology (OIT) in 2015, she brought with her an appreciation for partnerships with state Research and Education networks. Under her leadership, Rutgers and Edge have grown their relationship adding significant services from the Edge portfolio to Rutgers infrastructure, allowing the University to leverage the Edge expertise in both optical network and transit Internet services. Beyond Rutgers internal interests in Edge, she has also advocated for expanded partnerships with other New Jersey institutions of higher education and was a critical partner with Princeton and Edge in establishing the first New Jersey-based Internet2 Gigapop.





Network Leadership Award

The College of New Jersey (TCNJ), accepted on behalf of the institution by Dr. Sharon Blanton, Vice President for Operations. The College of New Jersey has been a higher education thought leader in moving infrastructure to the Cloud. Over the last two years, EdgeNet and TCNJ have worked closely to re-engineer their last-mile services to the Edge network to better enable their cloud migrations. By moving from carrier-lit circuits to dual dark fiber connections at both Newark and Philadelphia POPs, TCNJ positioned itself to leverage the network to facilitate affordable direct access to these critical cloud service providers. Edge was able to light the fiber for both production network services and these dedicated cloud interconnects driving significant value to the college through cost avoidance for these capabilities. In addition to having successfully implemented this new functionality, the College continues to lean forward and explore new options to improve some of their software as a service connectivity by leveraging a trial of the new Edge Equinix build to Ashburn Virginia.



Network Leadership Award

New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJIT), accepted on behalf of the

institution by Peter Teklinski, Associate CIO Infrastructure, and Security. A leader in High-Performance Computing and Big Data research in the state, NJIT recently launched a new high-performance computing (HPC) project to deploy a state-of-the-art HPC environment in a Tier 3 colocation facility that is purpose-built to support the high power and cooling demands of these systems. This system demands very high bandwidth network capacity and redundancy in order to support the many applications that will take advantage of this HPC cluster. NJIT determined that redundant, geographically diverse dark fiber was the most economical way to meet the design criteria.

Building and operating an optical network of this design would have required a significant one-time investment in optical hardware, along with acquiring training and building expertise to support the systems. NJIT chose instead to partner with EdgeNet to acquire, design, build and run this network as-a-service. This represents the first implementation of this type amongst NJIT's New Jersey-based peers and advances the research standing of the University nationally. In addition, NJIT became the first Edge member to leverage Edge's newly deployed Edge-Equinix fabric build to Ashburn Virginia, turning up services at the end of September.



Network Leadership Award

Bergen Community College, accepted on behalf of the institution by Ron Spaide, Chief Information Officer. Bergen Community College, the largest community college in New Jersey, recently upgraded its

"I thought the conference was brilliantly executed from start to finish! Everyone is trying to come out of COVID, and that means something different to each of us. Your agenda for both Wednesday and Thursday was compelling in a number of ways and addressed multiple audiences. I am deeply appreciative of the enormous amount of work that went into the planning and execution of the event."

- Maris L.
VP for Academic Affairs

connectivity to Edge to dual 10Gb circuits. Bergen was able to leverage the expansion of the Edge optical network to migrate one of their two new connections to dark fiber, becoming the first Edge dark fiber-connected county college in New Jersey. This move allows Bergen to plan for additional bandwidth, as well as low to no-cost last-mile connectivity to support new initiatives such as esports, a new Cybersecurity program, and even cloud migration implementations that utilize dedicated connectivity to any of the major cloud environments in an economical fashion.



Network Leadership Award

Brookdale Community College, accepted on behalf of the institution by George Sotirion, Chief Information Officer. Brookdale Community College maintains a group of remote learning locations across Monmouth County all connected back to the main campus in Lincroft via Edge-provided 100Mb circuits. After significant planning and preparation, even amid a pandemic, Brookdale bravely moved forward with an upgrade of its infrastructure to increase bandwidth to each of these centers ten-fold, while also becoming the first county college in New Jersey to connect to Edge at 10Gb. By partnering with Edge, Brookdale was able to build a multi-vendor last mile network, procured, project managed, and "just-in-time" delivered by Edge in a very successful partnership allowing a smooth transition with no billing overlaps for the WAN services.

OER Leadership Award



Marilyn Ochoa, Director for Library and Learning Center Services, Middlesex College; Steve Chudnick, Project Program Coordinator, Middlesex College; Robert Hilliker, Associate Provost, Library Administration Rowan University.

The Open Textbook Collaborative (OTC) project, funded through the U.S. Department of Education's Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE) program, is a statewide project managed by Middlesex College along with assistance from Brookdale Community College, Ocean County College, Passaic County Community College, and Rowan University. This three-year project is engaging a consortium of New Jersey community colleges and Rowan University to develop open educational resources (OER) in career and technical education STEM courses. Through this project, over 20 OERs are either in production or have already been created, in the disciplines of health services, innovation and technology, energy and infrastructure, and global manufacturing and supply chain management.

While the project team is composed of dozens of professionals from across New Jersey, the main executive team is led by curriculum council manager Rob Hilliker from Rowan University, project coordinator Steve Chudnick from Middlesex College, and project director Marilyn Ochoa, also from Middlesex College. Their leadership and dedication to coordinating such a large beneficial initiative will save students money on the cost of textbooks, improve student learning

outcomes, and develop sustainable and replicable practices. Here to accept this award on the team's behalf, Rob Hilliker.

Fostering Research Community



Engagement Award

Dr. Tabbetha A. Dobbins, Vice President for Research and Dean of the Graduate School, Rowan University. Rowan University recognizes that support for scientific computing differs significantly from that of Enterprise IT; and that it requires both technological capability, as well as technical and scientific expertise. In partnership with Edge, Rowan University is leveraging the NSF Campus Cyberinfrastructure funding opportunity to develop the advanced cyberinfrastructure strategy for supporting research. Dr. Dobbins has brought together a core, inclusive group of stakeholders, including academic leaders, faculty, central IT, and the library to learn firsthand the challenges they are facing and what solutions would be helpful. In partnership with Edge, guest speakers are invited to raise awareness to existing resources at Rowan, the region, and the nation and to broaden the Rowan Community's understanding of what options are available. Her leadership in establishing this engaged community and building relationships across campus through active information sharing is commendable and a model to be followed.

Leading into the Future: Creating a



Sustainable Research Enterprise

Lamont O. Repollet, President, Kean University. In November 2021, Kean University joined the list of elite public research universities with its designation as the state's first urban research university. This prestigious designation will further expand the reach of Kean's research and creative projects within art, science, and humanities, and advance the mission to become a national model for urban research universities across the U.S. Under the leadership of President Repollett, Kean University is transforming the institution's competitiveness for research grants and is strategically positioning itself to elevate the University to Carnegie R2 research status.

To continue Kean's advancement toward Carnegie R2 status, the University is working to enhance its research portfolio, continue investing in human capital and adding new tenure-track faculty across multiple disciplines, and further expand its network of affiliated startup companies and building the infrastructure for the commercialization of intellectual property. Kean is also offering faculty grants to allow researchers to embark on projects that focus on urban issues and diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives. Additionally, faculty bandwidths have been redirected to allow more time for research collaboration and provide participation opportunities in research for a greater number of students.





Notable Sessions and Panel Discussions

Each year's EdgeCon offers a unique opportunity for attendees to hear from other leaders in the region and explore their unique experiences, what solutions have been successful, the mistakes or challenges they had to overcome, and the innovative ideas driving the education space forward. Attendees of EdgeCon 2022 enjoyed thought-provoking presentations and panel discussions, including:

In an age where delivering high quality digitally-infused learning experiences will be essential for success in attracting and retaining students, Josh Gaul, Chief Digital Learning Officer, Edge, explored ***The Realities of Building Flexible Digital Learning Experiences***. He discussed the infrastructure, support, and strategy an institution should have in place to make digital learning a success for students, staff, and instructors and how online, hybrid, and HyFlex learning can impact their institution's educational delivery strategy.

In the last several years, cybersecurity concerns have evolved from an area of focus driven by IT specialists to a broad strategic priority for executive leaders across the institution. ***Cybersecurity Impacts on Operations, Insurance, and Finances*** was a panel discussion moderated by David Sherry, Chief Information Security Officer, Princeton University, that discussed cybersecurity challenges including the affordability of cybersecurity insurance, risk management & operational continuity, and ransomware readiness. In ***Evolving Network Connectivity to Support the Modern Higher Education Institution***, Edge's Forough Ghahramani, Associate Vice President for Research, Innovation, and Sponsored Programs; Bruce Tyrrell, Associate Vice President, Programs and Services; and Jim Stankiewicz, Principal Network Architect discussed Edge's innovative networking strategies and collaborative networking efforts and what institutions should consider in their long-term strategic planning and execution of a technology-powered future.

Mark Meara, Vice President of Technical Operations and Chief Information Officer, Edge, led a panel discussion ***Exploring the Mega-Trends Powering Institutional Modernization*** where panelists highlighted the challenges and opportunities represented by the mega-trends facing higher education today and how institutional leaders can plan for success amidst so much change.

Edge's Christopher Markham, Vice President for Information Technology & Economic Advancement and Dan Miller, Associate Vice President for EdgeMarket, explored ways members can enhance

their capabilities to deliver positive outcomes for the administrative, operational, and student success needs of their communities. From accessibility to cybersecurity to procurement, the ***Leveraging the Benefits of the Edge Consortium Model*** session showed how a model of nonprofit partnership and digital transformation powers the success of Edge and its members.

Positive Accolades

With over 25 sponsors from across the technology spectrum supporting the event and a variety of industry leading vendors sharing solutions for today's biggest challenges, attendees were able to engage with and learn from a growing community of digital learning professionals. "You hit a home run with the event this year. It felt like a perfect balance of free networking time, vendor interaction (and good placement), and valuable sessions," said a Vice President for IT. A Chief Information Officer from the region added, "It was great to be back in person. I thought the sessions were very informative and timely with what institutions are dealing with at this time, especially the Cybersecurity session. Always a great networking event!"

A first-time attendee reflects on his experience at EdgeCon, saying, "As it was my first conference, I loved seeing the quantity of like-minded professionals interacting and sharing interest in learning, as well as hearing discussions on the innovations and experiences of everyone involved." Additional praise for the event included, "I thought the conference was brilliantly executed from start to finish. Your agenda was compelling in a number of ways and addressed multiple audiences." A participant shared, "The opening speaker, Josh Gaul, was fantastic and offered much food for thought for every sector."



To further build upon the momentum of EdgeCon Autumn 2022 and the successful return of in-person events, the next conference in the EdgeCon series has been announced—EdgeCon Spring 2023: Excelling in a Digital Teaching & Learning Future. Hosted at Middlesex College on March 24, 2023, EdgeCon Spring 2023 will be a single-day event that provides a dynamic schedule of inspiring general sessions and several tracks of breakout sessions, as well as more opportunities to network with peers, engage with industry vendors, and gather valuable insight from the education community. "We were thrilled with EdgeCon Autumn 2022, and have heard from many participants that it was the best conference Edge has hosted," says Dr. Samuel Conn, President and CEO at Edge. "We thank all those who attended this year, and look forward to hosting an even better conference next year!"

To reserve your spot for EdgeCon Spring 2023, you can register now at njedge.net/blog/edgecon-spring-2023.