NERCOMP

NorthEast Regional Computing Program

NERCOMP Strategic Plan 2021 – 2023

Adopted December 8, 2020

www.nercomp.org

INTRODUCTION

NERCOMP

Founded in 1956, NERCOMP is a professional society for university and collegiate information and technology professionals in the northeastern United States. It currently serves close to 300 member institutions and nearly 10,000 individual members (individuals affiliated with member institutions who sign up to be a part of the NERCOMP community, hereafter referred to as "members").

NERCOMP produces hundreds of professional development and networking events, classes, and workshops, including a major annual conference that attracts more than 500 attendees. NERCOMP also hosts an online job board and resource library and manages vendor and licensing relationships with 23 Solutions Partners.

In 1997, NERCOMP entered a partnership with EDUCAUSE (then CAUSE). This strategic association enhances and coordinates both NERCOMP's and EDUCAUSE's educational conferences and initiatives.

NERCOMP is governed by a 13-person Board of Trustees representing information and technology professionals from a wide range of higher education institutions. It has a staff of one part-time and two full-time employees who manage day-to-day operations with the assistance of the board and member volunteers. NERCOMP's members are integrally involved in creating, planning, and delivering all aspects of NERCOMP's programming.

Planning Process

In September 2019, NERCOMP developed an RFP for consulting services to facilitate the development of its next three-year plan. After reviewing proposals and conducting interviews with several firms, NERCOMP selected DP Forand Nonprofit Management Consulting, LLC to help them develop a roadmap to guide the organization through 2023. A Task Force of five Board members and two employees was charged with overseeing the plan's creation.

Early in the strategic planning process, the Task Force determined that its ability to serve NERCOMP's members would be greatly enhanced by gathering additional insights about the needs, interests, and goals of the organization's current and prospective members. In January 2020, NERCOMP hired RDW Group of Boston to conduct a market study of its stakeholders. RDW's research would include in-depth interviews with ten members and the distribution of an electronic survey to close to 10,000 members and 2,400 non-member higher education information and technology professionals.

The Impact of COVID

RDW sent out the first survey in early March but halted dissemination and collection of data on March 22, 2020, as COVID-19 caused tremendous disruption throughout the country, including at institutions of higher education.

The information and technology departments of colleges and universities were especially impacted, as their already fast-paced, dynamic, and often under-resourced environments became even more unpredictable, in-demand, and burdened. As colleges and universities shifted to remote learning in record time, NERCOMP's members were on the front lines, keeping their institutions operational. In many cases, these departments were leading the academic response to the pandemic.

Although there is optimism that the pandemic will be mitigated and strict protocols eventually will be rescinded, it comes with a recognition that there is no going back to the way things were. During the worst of the pandemic, NERCOMP's ability to be flexible, responsive, and collaborative proved a powerful resource. It was also clear that as demands on members became more intense and less predictable, listening and understanding their needs became more important than ever. Based on its experiences during the shut-down, NERCOMP has redoubled its commitment to support its members as they navigate the future.

Planning Continues

On May 6, 2020, RDW resumed its market research. Ultimately, ten members were interviewed, and 248 non-members and 450 members completed surveys, providing invaluable data about their interactions with NERCOMP and how NERCOMP could best serve their needs.

The Task Force continued to meet monthly to assess information, consider and debate strategic issues, and make determinations about the direction of the organization based on RDW's research and other findings. The Board provided input on an ongoing basis.

The strategic planning process included an extensive review of organizational background documents, interviews with NERCOMP's Board and staff, an analysis of both its membership and peer organizations, additional research on the organization as well as the environment in which it operates, and wide-ranging and thoughtful conversations about the organization's future.

NERCOMP's mission was re-affirmed, and a new vision and set of values were developed to guide the organization. Three organizational goals supported by key strategies set the organization's future direction and will focus activities and resource allocations over the next three years.

Based on the continued precariousness of the world in general and higher education in particular, the Task Force decided that it would be difficult to project targets and benchmarks three years out. Instead, they set forth broad, three-year objectives in the plan. Specific objectives will be created each year based on more timely and relevant information. These annual objectives, driven by the goals and strategies in the plan, will then be used as the basis of yearly operating plans.

A Commitment to Members

The plan that has emerged from this process underscores what NERCOMP has known for years, that its members are its greatest asset and its reason for being. From the outset, the goal of this plan has been to determine how to maximize value to them.

Through the duration of this plan, NERCOMP will work to deepen the sense of community among its members. It will grow the number of people who are members of NERCOMP and expand their sense of ownership and engagement as well. It will strive to deliver programs and services that enrich members both professionally and personally. And it will continue to tap into the energy, creativity, and expertise of members to do so.

If NERCOMP is to serve its members to the best of its ability, it must know them – deeply. An investment in its capacity to communicate with them, and facilitate their communication with each other, is critical to achieving that end.

NERCOMP's Future

Over the next three years, NERCOMP will focus on three key areas:
- A focus on members
- Responsive programs and services
- Deepened community engagement

NERCOMP's strategic direction will be driven by the organization's mission and its commitment to understanding and meeting the needs of its members. Decisions will reflect an in-depth exploration of those needs, informed by ongoing and direct input from members themselves.

This strategic plan is very much a living document. It frames NERCOMP's evolving role as an adaptive organization in a rapidly changing environment. It builds on the organization's longstanding strengths and invites the consideration of new roles and opportunities. Some future directions are clearly delineated, while others will be explored during the next three years. Overall, it furthers NERCOMP's goal of serving and connecting higher education information and technology professionals throughout the Northeast.

NERCOMP's STRATEGIC DIRECTION

MISSION *(Why We Exist)*

NERCOMP cultivates communities of practice around information and technology, promotes strategic partnerships, and advances innovation & leadership in educational institutions across the Northeastern United States.

VISION *(What We Hope to Achieve)*

NERCOMP's vision is to connect, inspire and support the strongest, most engaged, and most inclusive community of higher education information and technology professionals in the Northeast.

VALUES: *(Our Core Beliefs and Commitment to our Stakeholders)*

Building Community
We are a vibrant community whose members are committed to one another's success. We learn from each other, share ideas and networks, problem-solve together, and advance the collective work of our field. Our community is further enhanced by the active involvement of our vendor partners. NERCOMP will continue to facilitate connections, nurture relationships and encourage the exchange of ideas as we expand and strengthen our dynamic community.

Focusing on Members
We exist to identify and meet the needs and aspirations of our members. We are keenly aware of the extraordinary expectations and challenges our members face, and we take seriously our role as an attentive, agile and responsive partner. NERCOMP is dedicated to being member-driven and member-focused because, simply stated, without our members there is no NERCOMP.

Advancing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
We are committed to advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion within our profession. We also recognize the need to approach all of our interactions with an unwavering commitment to anti-racism. To that end, NERCOMP promises to be even more intentional and bold in our efforts, and we expect our members to hold us accountable in meeting these expectations.

Promoting Career Long Learning
In a fast-paced, rapidly changing profession, our members need the most up-to-date knowledge delivered via easily accessible, user-friendly formats. NERCOMP helps individuals grow and thrive – at every stage of their careers. From entry-level employees

looking to take on the next challenge to seasoned professionals seeking to perform at the very highest levels, NERCOMP will offer meaningful opportunities to learn, lead, connect and succeed.

Delivering Exceptional Value

Value is more important than ever in deciding where to invest increasingly scarce time and money. As stewards of your investment, we believe that membership should deliver even more than its face-value. Available savings on licensing agreements and free and discounted professional development opportunities alone cover the cost of membership. With input from the community, we pledge to provide added value with enhanced benefits and other extras that come with being a member of NERCOMP.

NERCOMP ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS AND STRATEGIES 2021 – 2023

MEMBER-FOCUS

GOAL: Gain a deep understanding of and build strong relationships with both member institutions and the individuals who advance information and technology within those institutions.

Strategies:

> Invest in NERCOMP's communications capacity to better identify, segment, track and provide information about and to members.

> Regularly survey members to identify what they respond to and understand how NERCOMP can encourage more engagement.

> Customize information content and delivery based on member preferences.

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

GOAL: Deliver consistently high quality, relevant programs and services that meet the evolving needs of NERCOMP members.

Strategies:

> Assess current program offerings to ensure that content, quality, delivery, and affordability meet member needs and expectations.

> Solicit ongoing input from members and solutions partners to identify opportunities for the integration of new offerings, enhanced content and/or improved methods of delivery.

> Create a streamlined process to pilot promising new offerings that respond to demand or proactively address identified opportunities.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

GOAL: Increase engagement in all aspects of NERCOMP.

Strategies:

Identify and pursue opportunities to increase NERCOMP's membership through targeted recruitment, as well as retention efforts.

Provide members with a wide range of meaningful opportunities to contribute their diverse talent, experience, and perspective to the NERCOMP community, including program development.

Leverage new and existing technology to facilitate participation among members.

Foster mutually beneficial relationships with new and existing solutions partners.

KEY OBJECTIVES 2021 – 2023

Increase the number and diversity of member institutions.

Strengthen the sense of community and increase opportunities for interaction, evaluated based on member feedback.

Increase the number and level of engagement of volunteers who shape, lead, and execute NERCOMP's programs, events, services and committee work.

Expand participation and attendance for NERCOMP programs, events, and services.

Increase the value of partnerships as reported by solutions partners, as well as members and member institutions.

NERCOMP Strategic Planning Task Force

Kevin Brassard, Board Chair
Robin Robinson, Board Vice Chair
Janet Hill, Board Secretary
Jay Rozgonyi, Board Member
Karen Warren, Board Member
Lisa DiMauro, Staff
Ananda Jones, Staff
Facilitated by Debra Pittorie Forand, DP Forand Nonprofit Management Consulting, LLC

NERCOMP Board

Kevin Brassard (Chair), Interim Deputy Chief Information and Security Officer, Central Connecticut State University
Robin Robinson (Vice-Chair), Director of Education Technology and eLearning, Framingham State University
Dr. Candace K. Sleeman (Treasurer), STEM Technical Program Facilitator, Southern New Hampshire
Janet Hill (Secretary), Director, Educational Technology Systems and Services, Tufts University
Jeremy Anderson, Deputy Chief of Analytics and Technology Transformation, Bay Path University
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