## EMBARGOED UNTIL 10 a.m. EDT Thursday, July 10, 2014

Press Release: July 10, 2014

## Higher Education, Library Groups Release Net Neutrality Principles

Today, higher education and library organizations representing thousands of colleges, universities, and libraries nationwide released a joint set of Net Neutrality Principles they recommend form the basis of an upcoming Federal Communications Commission (FCC) decision to protect the openness of the Internet. The groups believe network neutrality protections are essential to protecting freedom of speech, educational achievement, and economic growth.

The organizations endorsing these principles are:

American Association of Community Colleges (AACC)

American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU)

American Council on Education (ACE)

American Library Association (ALA)

Association of American Universities (AAU)

Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU)

Association of Research Libraries (ARL)

Chief Officers of State Library Agencies (COSLA)

**EDUCAUSE** 

Modern Language Association (MLA)

National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (NAICU)

Libraries and institutions of higher education are leaders in creating, fostering, using, extending, and maximizing the potential of the Internet for research, education, and the public good. These groups are extremely concerned that the recent court decision vacating two of the key "open Internet" rules creates an opportunity for Internet providers to block or degrade (e.g., arbitrarily slow) certain Internet traffic, or prioritize certain services, while relegating public interest services to the "slow lane."

At its best, the Internet is a platform for learning, collaboration, and interaction among students, faculty, library patrons, local communities, and the world. Libraries and institutions of higher education make an enormous amount of Internet content available to the general public—from basic distance learning classes to multimedia instruction, cloud computing, digitized historical databases, research around "big data," and many other educational and civic resources—all of which require an open Internet. Institutions of higher education and libraries do not object to paying for the high-capacity Internet connections that they need to support their students, faculty, administrators, and library patrons; but once connected, they should not have to pay additional fees to receive prioritized transmission of their content, services, or applications.

These groups support strong, enforceable rules to ensure that higher education and libraries can continue to deliver online educational and public interest content at a level of speed and quality on par with commercial providers. The proposed principles call upon the FCC to ban blocking, degradation, and "paid prioritization"; ensure that the same rules apply to fixed and mobile broadband providers; promote greater transparency of broadband services; and prevent providers from treating similar customers in significantly different ways.

The full text of the principles is attached to this press release.

"Colleges and universities depend on broadband Internet access to support high-quality, mediarich teaching, learning, and research," said Diana G. Oblinger, President and CEO of EDUCAUSE. "At a time when the country views higher education and its use of technology as central to social and economic progress, we cannot make the quality and effectiveness of learning and research dependent on the capacity of institutions—and ultimately students and their families—to pay additional fees on top of the costs they already bear for broadband access. The FCC must ensure an open Internet, which is essential to higher education's ability to fulfill its mission in the digital age."

"America's libraries collect, create, and disseminate essential information to the public over the Internet, and enable our users to create and distribute their own digital content and applications," said American Library Association President Courtney Young. "Network neutrality is essential to ensuring open and nondiscriminatory access to Internet content and services for all. The American Library Association is proud to stand with other education and learning organizations in outlining core principles for preserving the open Internet as a vital platform for free speech, innovation, and civic engagement."

"The FCC should use the joint principles submitted by higher education and library groups as a framework for creating rules to protect an open Internet that has fostered equitable access to information and sparked new innovations, including distance learning such as MOOCs," said Carol Pitts Diedrichs, President of the Association of Research Libraries (ARL). "Without rules governing net neutrality to ensure that blocking and discrimination do not occur, the Internet could be available only to those with the greatest financial resources to pay to have their content prioritized."

"The Modern Language Association is committed to the principles of net neutrality that have long protected the fundamental character of the Internet as a space for open, nondiscriminatory, and creative communication," said Rosemary Feal, Executive Director of the Modern Language Association.

"An open Internet is critical to the continued success of American higher education," said Muriel A. Howard, President of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU). "If the FCC were to abandon net neutrality in favor of a toll superhighway, colleges and universities would be stuck in the slow lane. This would undermine much of the promise of the Internet for research and teaching, and exclude the very entities that contributed so significantly to the development of the Internet."

"The Internet has helped serve as a great equalizer for society—providing information on virtually everything to anyone with a connection. The enormous societal advancements over the past two decades have been made possible in large part because of students, researchers, and educators' ability to create, discover, and improve upon research and content posted on the web," APLU President Peter McPherson said. "APLU opposes efforts to degrade Internet service, which could create a slow lane for some while prioritizing Internet access to others. Certainly Internet service providers should continue to deliver innovative services, but those services must come in the form of optional upgrades, not automatic downgrades."

## For further information, please contact:

AASCU: Jennifer Dawn Walpole, Manager of Communications,

(202) 478-4665, <u>walpolej@aascu.org</u>

ALA: Jazzy Wright, Press Officer,

(202) 628-8410, ext. 8208, jwright@alawash.org

ARL: Krista Cox, Director of Public Policy Initiatives,

(202) 296-2296, krista@arl.org

COSLA: Timothy Cherubini, Executive Director,

(859) 514-9826, tcherubini@amrms.com

**EDUCAUSE:** Jarret Cummings, Director, Policy and External Relations,

(202) 331-5372, jcummings@educause.edu

MLA: Rosemary Feal, Executive Director,

(646) 576-5000, rfeal@mla.org