

**Research Computing Subcommittee  
Minutes – April 21, 2005**

**Meeting location:** Heritage Room, SUB, at 4:20pm

**Members Present:** Randy Gaines (IT Services), Vitit Kantabutra (Engineering), Cyndy Kelchner (IRH), Skip Lohse (Anthropology), Ben Nickell (Mathematics), Ralph Norton (Research Office).

**Absent:** James Bigelow (Pharmacy), Dave Coffland (Math, Science & Tech Education), Ken Trimmer (CIS, Business).

Meeting called to order by chair (Cyndy Kelchner) with apologies for the late start due to a previous meeting.

1. Minutes from previous meeting were approved. Randy Gaines reported clarification from Randy Stamm (ITRC) that **any** faculty member is welcome to use the ITRC, they don't have to be teaching.
2. Administrative details
  - a. Ralph Norton agreed to take minutes, with help from Cyndy Kelchner.
  - b. For now, keep current committee name with acronym **RCS** (Research Computing Subcommittee). This was set up as a formal subcommittee of TOC, and details of our charge and how we fit into the overall structure will be distributed to members when the latest version is available.
  - c. Membership – discussion of the need for broad representation of the numerous different constituencies of the subcommittee, vs. keeping the group down to a workable size. Discussion reached no conclusion; the topic will be re-examined once the details of the new governance model/structure are available.
3. Faculty input from colleges
  - a. College of Engineering (Vitit Kantabutra): faculty reported need for hardware (e.g., cluster) for numerical analyses, particularly for the MCE Research Center.
    - i. Several tangential topics arose, re: what types of services may be appropriate to be handled by a centralized resource.
      - (a) Was the subcommittee to be covering all technology needs, or just computer-related technologies? Conclusion: primary emphasis would be on research computing-related topics.
      - (b) Is there a need for a Research Support Center, e.g., modeled after the ITRC? No conclusion reached.
      - (c) Should a centralized service support “open source” software, i.e., software whose source code is made freely available for use or modification. Conclusion: discussion deferred, we are not at this stage yet.

- b. Office of Research (Ralph Norton): need for a clearinghouse to purchase software at discounts (bulk, educational) and also to match software needs with resources across departments, as discussed at first meeting.
  - c. College of Arts & Sciences (Skip Lohse): need for an even broader clearinghouse – not just software, but also covering hardware and expertise, helping to disseminate **information**, what's available on campus, etc.
    - i. Cyndy Kelchner commented that the new IBRI (ISU Biomedical Research Institute) is planning to do this for large research equipment.
  - d. College of Arts & Sciences (Ben Nickell): looking for collaboration, shared facilities, possible central (big) research computing facility; refer to emailed document from Mike Thomas (Biology) for additional suggestions.
  - e. College of Health Professions (Cyndy Kelchner): database development, relational and **secure** (i.e., securing confidential data from inappropriate access, similar to WebCT).
4. Focus of this subcommittee (scope of work). General discussion focused on:
- a. **Define/Develop Constituency:** Identify the existing community of research computing users, cultivate them and encourage a culture of collaborative research computing and resource sharing.
  - b. **Identify Constituency Needs:** Research computing generally includes numerical analyses (intensive number-crunching) and data-intensive research (storage and manipulation of large amounts of data). Do other needs exist? What support do the users need/desire?
  - c. Once we identify the user community, we will be better situated to address the question of appropriate membership for this subcommittee.
5. Summary of action items
- a. **Randy Gaines** to send latest version of TOC / ExecTech structure to chair for distribution as soon as it is available.
  - b. Invitation to all faculty to identify themselves as interested in research computing. **Cyndy Kelchner** to draft invitation and send to **all members** for distribution within colleges.
  - c. Create survey questions for respondents regarding resources and needs. **Ben Nickell** to start this process.
  - d. Individual visits with respondents to determine their specific resources and needs. We anticipate no more than a few dozen respondents across campus. **All members.**
6. **Next meeting – Thursday May 26, 2005, at 4:00 pm in the Snake River Room, SUB.** Discussion was inconclusive as to whether to have summer meetings or not. Those present agreed to meet in late May.