

Research Computing Subcommittee

Minutes – December 7, 2005

Meeting location: Snake River Room, SUB, at 1:00pm

Members Present: Cyndy Kelchner (Chair), James Bigelow, Dave Coffland, Deb Easterly, Skip Lohse, Ben Nickell, Ralph Norton, Mark Norviel, Ken Trimmer.

I. Minutes from Previous Meeting. The minutes of November 16 were read by members. Norviel corrected the attendance list by pointing out Randy Gaines was not in attendance. Minutes were then approved as amended.

II. Committee Mission Statement. A second draft of a Mission Statement for the Committee was shared by Bigelow, with discussion following. Comments were generally positive, with only minor changes suggested. Bigelow volunteered to incorporate the modifications and email a copy to all subcommittee members. Committee members voted to approve the draft as amended (see attached).

New Business: Coffland distributed a rough initial draft of recommendations from this subcommittee to the Enterprise Computing Subcommittee. Kelchner felt the recommendations should focus on the potential overlap of research and administrative data. Suggestions for modifications to the draft included: a) policies for access to administrative data for research purposes, b) training researchers to use the enterprise system, and c) a few one-sentence examples of how researchers might make use of the administrative datasets, so as to clarify the need. Discussion of that need followed, in general terms, such as the ability of researchers to either download administrative datasets to compare with their own data, or to upload their data to compare with the remote administrative datasets; how identifiers would need to be stripped from the data, etc. Kelchner pointed out that specific examples may appear in the User Survey results, and asked the members who summarized pertinent survey questions to review those responses for such examples and send them to Coffland. Coffland agreed to redraft the recommendations for the next meeting. Trimmer volunteered to review how other universities in the Rocky Mountain area use their enterprise systems for research.

III. Subcommittee Membership Guidelines. Kelchner asked subcommittee members to discuss their nominations of individuals to follow the membership guidelines approved at the last meeting. She also asked them to discuss their own interest in/ability to continue serving on the subcommittee. She stressed she wished to keep the committee small, and that she favored approaching only those who did not have other obligations which would prevent their regular attendance (for this reason, some potential candidates – e.g., Corey Schou – are not among those in the final listing below).

At different points in the discussion, members asked if there was representation of the following among the nominees (there are): Humanity/Social Sciences, database users, individual research centers, and computer science expertise. The following (by category) were suggested as potential candidates for membership:

Active Big Users: Keith Weber (GIS), Mike Thomas (bioinformatics), Phil Cole (Physics), Cyndy Kelchner (IRH).

Small Users: Peter Denner (Education – assessment), James Bigelow (Pharmacy – instrument users), Shannon Novak (Anthropology – imaging), Ralph Chapman (IMNH – imaging), Bernadette Howlett (PA – database), David Beard (CIS – database), Ken Trimmer (Business – database).

Administrative Users: The subcommittee felt it was appropriate to have representation from both the Office of Research and IT Services. Currently there is one IT Services representative (Norviel) and two Office of Research representatives (Easterly, Norton). Norviel was willing to continue service if desired, but also raised the possibility that a to-be-hired Database Manager may be more appropriate. The time line for filling this position is unclear, and Norviel volunteered to continue serving for so long as it was the most sensible option. Norton noted that he had a professional interest in attending the meetings, but that Easterly's role on the subcommittee may be more important to its function than his. He raised the possibility of being a non-voting member, remaining on the subcommittee's mailing list, etc. He noted the parallel situation he has with the Research Coordinating Council (RCC). The group received this suggestion favorably, and thought it may have broader application as well, for others wishing to participate in the subcommittee. Kelchner suggested the title of *Ex Officio* member. Easterly volunteered to continue service as the Office of Research representative, and as the representative for the Research Centers/Institutes.

Other Members' Continued Service: Lohse expressed a vested interest in the subcommittee's activities but was already over-committed and could not attend. Some discussion followed of the possibility of his appointing a designee, perhaps Robert Schlader, a current graduate student. Coffland expressed willingness to serve, but also suggested Peter Denner may be a more appropriate representative, should Denner be interested in serving. All other present members indicated a willingness to continue service as needed. Kelchner to contact Kantabutra to determine his interest in continuing.

Norton requested clarification of the status an *Ex Officio* member would have, regarding participation in discussions, etc. The committee decided the *Ex Officio* members would have all rights of regular members, except: a) they could not vote, and b) they would not count as part of the requirements for a quorum.

Discussion also included whether the offices of Chair and Secretary needed to be filled by members. Kelchner volunteered to serve *Ex Officio* as Chair if no one else wanted the job. Norton likewise volunteered to take minutes as Secretary. Easterly suggested, and all members endorsed, asking Dr. Ford if a member of the Office of Research secretarial staff might be made available to take minutes.

Norton asked how future meetings were viewed, as "open" or "closed." Kelchner stated she did not want to hold any closed meetings, but also did not feel the need to actively promote non-member attendance, as smaller groups seemed to operate more effectively.

Norton also asked how the potential candidates would be approached. Kelchner to compile list of candidates from today's discussion, perhaps ranked by preference, and distribute to subcommittee for comments. Kelchner to then contact candidates by email to determine interest, with the offer to review the subcommittee's minutes if desired. Actions after such contact have yet to be determined.

IV. Summary of Action Items:

Bigelow to make approved changes to Mission Statement, and disseminate by e-mail.

All members to review the User Survey questions they summarized to find specific examples of a researcher needing access to the administrative database. Send examples to Coffland. **Coffland** to redraft the recommendations to the Enterprise Computing Subcommittee for the next meeting.

Trimmer to review how other universities in the Rocky Mountain area use their enterprise systems for research.

Easterly to request assistance of Office of Research secretarial staff to take minutes.

Kelchner to compile list of candidates for subcommittee membership discussed in today's meeting and distribute for comments. **Kelchner** to then contact candidates to determine interest.

VI. Next Meeting: Date to be determined once next semester's schedules are finalized. Kelchner expressed the wish it be early in the semester, and a regular day/time established.

Meeting adjourned 2:00 p.m.