

Research Computing Subcommittee

Minutes – November 16, 2005

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

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

I. Minutes from Previous Meeting. The minutes of October 18 were approved.

II. Committee Mission Statement. An initial draft (attached) of a Mission Statement for the Committee was read by Bigelow, with discussion following. Comments were generally positive. There was additional discussion of the language used in the draft, and Bigelow agreed to re-draft the Statement for the next meeting.

Norton noted the lack of reference to the Research Coordinating Council in the draft, one of the two original (with CSAC) overseers of the Subcommittee, and asked for clarification regarding the group's reporting. The Subcommittee agreed reporting should be to the IT Governance body only; Easterly would act as an informal liaison with RCC as needed. Kelchner to seek formal permission from the RCC for this change.

III. Committee Membership Guidelines. A draft set of guidelines (attached) was distributed and discussed. Considerable discussion followed. To summarize: Overall structure was approved; the committee favored small groups over larger ones, and noted meetings (so far) with about five (various) members present seemed the most productive. The committee felt it appropriate to leave the member numbers as presented in the draft in items 1 and 3 as they were (i.e., 7 in #1, and a total of 8 in #3). Members were asked to consider, and supply at the next meeting, names for potential committee members (i.e., big users, etc.) under this structure. This raised the issue of present membership structure and the potential for transition. Lohse suggested the possibility of all members simultaneously submitting voluntary resignations, which the subcommittee could accept or not. No formal action, however, was taken on the idea. Kelchner proposed that each member consider where they might fit into the new structure, and that the entire committee membership would be considered at the next meeting.

Bigelow moved the membership guidelines be accepted as written. Motion carried unanimously.

IV. Survey Results for Research Computing Users. Members were asked to report on their analysis of the two survey questions they were assigned after the previous meeting. Reports and discussion were considerable. There were four concerns that emerged repeatedly in the reports:

- central database or data warehouse, large scale
- training and support for database management and data analysis (e.g., database administrator and staff resources)
- budget/funding for research computing infrastructure
- central storage and backup (storage area network - SAN)

Additional items raised included the following: it is not clear what the shortfall is between the level of existing computing power and the level of future need; researchers felt the (previous) administration was not sensitive to researchers' needs; and that users/researchers felt the priority should be obtaining the "biggest bang for the buck." Some of the issues appeared relevant to the Enterprise Computing Committee due to the overlap between research and administrative computing. Coffland to write a brief summary of these issues, and Kelchner to bring them to the Enterprise Computing Committee.

Summaries of the individual question analyses will be put online for committee members' reference at <http://www.physics.isu.edu/rcs/summaries/> (email your summaries to nickbenj@isu.edu).

V. Summary of Action Items:

Bigelow to redraft Mission Statement, incorporating the discussed language changes.

Kelchner to seek formal permission from the RCC for change in line of reporting for this committee.

All members to think about nominations for potential members of the committee under the approved membership structure, including current members.

Coffland to write a brief summary/list of issues related to administrative computing, and Kelchner to bring them to the Enterprise Computing Committee.

VI. Next Meeting: Week of December 7, 2005. Agenda will include revising the committee membership for spring semester.

Research Computing Subcommittee Membership Guidelines

Approved November 16, 2005 by the Research Computing Subcommittee.

1. This committee will have at least 5 members and no more than 10 members, with the optimum around 7 members for effective committee work.
2. The term of office is one year, with no limit on number of consecutive terms. New appointments to this committee will only be made by the committee itself, in consultation with the Technology Review Group.
3. Types and distribution of members:
 - a. Active, big research computing users who typically drive the need for hardware/networking
 - i. Aim for 3 members of this type
 - b. Smaller research computing users (or representatives of this type of users) whose needs might include software/support/expertise
 - i. Aim for 3 members of this type
 - c. Administrative unit representatives such as IT Services and Office of Research
 - i. Aim for 2 members of this type
4. Representation from individual Research Centers / Institutes
 - a. Each Research Center / Institute may choose to be represented by a committee member from the Office of Research.
 - b. A representative of an individual Research Center / Institute may serve in one of the above member categories as appropriate.
5. Within each of the above member categories, membership is open to all types of ISU employees, and diversity across the committee is encouraged. Members must have interest in and enthusiasm for improving the research computing infrastructure and potential collaborations across ISU, and sufficient time to commit to this committee.
6. Strict representation by College is not appropriate for the work of this particular committee, as not all Colleges have research computing users. However, where possible, representation across multiple Colleges will be sought within the above member categories.