CCAST ADVISORY COUNCIL MEETING

R2 Rm 212, 2/14/2018

Notes by: Becky Hellman, Dane Skow

Attending: Kelly Rusch, Dane Skow, Aaron Reinholz, John Nowatzki, Dinesh Katti, Bora Suzen, Jerry Gao, Dmitri Kilin, Amy Reese, Becky Hellman

Dane: planning on having a meeting once per quarter.

Kelly: welcome everyone. Establishment of committee marks an interesting time at NDSU – how do we expand and grow the infrastructure of advanced computing. Interesting things going on at the state: Digital Initiatives Task Force. We’re building on our community of people

Clarifying up front that this council is not in a MANAGEMENT role, but an advisory body. Will write up a charge, through email, to clarify role.

Introductions

ND FY18 & 19 Budget status – Kelly: Up until this fiscal year, CCAST has been supported solely by earmarks, which will end Sept 2018. Initial appropriated budget requests were developed 2 years ago. Budget cuts, didn’t get full request. Looking toward FY19, hope to get closer to the original requested dollars. Operations should be able to be covered, but equipment refresh dollars may be difficult to obtain especially through appropriated funds. Too early to say what the budget will be. We cannot be a research university without ARC. State did not give NDSU EXTRA funds for CCAST – NDSU made the decision to fund CCAST from within its total budget.

Kelly left meeting.

Projects Underway – Dane:

- Website Updates: Resources for proposal writers; link to list special projects; XD-MOD; other updates to https://www.ccast.ndsu.edu
- Thunder expansion – purchases have been made, waiting for installation. Outage planned for installation on 5-6 March 2018 – hope to complete in one day but may take two. ADVICE NEEDED: currently planning outages during regular business hours to take advantage of access to support, but would listen to feedback if evening/weekend hours would be preferred by the user community. The cost may be longer outages. Will try to retain access to the filesystem at highest uptime. INITIAL FEEDBACK: stay with what’s working for now.
- Sidenote agenda item: Upgrade schedules (equipment, operating systems, etc.). Dane would like feedback from council and community.
- Cluster 3 repurposing to a virtualization cluster.
- Recruiting for Research Computing Facilitator positions – +1 FY18, +1 FY 19
- Monitoring
  - XDMoD
  - Machine Room Cameras
• EPSCoR Interns & Training: eight total – four EPSCoR (develop & deliver training) & four CCAST (help sysadmins).
• Data Transfer Node/Infrastructure – data transfer tools inadequate, but working on improving this.
  o Globus (John N would like a demo)
  o Science DMZ – NSF Grant proposal recently submitted in partnership with UND & NDSU IT. Expect decision in August 2018
  o CCAST/IT storage systems – nothing set up to share these. Discussions underway.
• Sustainability model: some funds will come from university, but some will have to come from user fees. Working on setting fee schedules. Would be interested in feedback. Condo model will still be available.
• Further discussion of condo model and how it affects grant proposal writing: what is included, round numbers, actual costs. Proposed by Dane: University provides: floor space, power, administration of the machines purchased by the researcher.

CCAST Strategic Plan Draft – please review, track changes
CCAST Policy updates draft – please review, track changes

Privacy of council business: discussion.

  Dane proposes being as transparent as possible. Decided to post minutes of meetings on website.

  Should sysadmins be invited to meetings? Dane suggests you will get more accurate information if they are invited. Consensus received to invite them.

Priorities: Feedback on what aspects of CCAST should receive highest priority

  4 votes: Compute Capabilities – complaints heard of long queue wait times
  3 votes: Software Capabilities – site licenses are onerous to cost share with colleges/depts.
  2 votes: National/Regional Center Outreach – need to establish relationships with peers and possible partners
  1 vote: Storage Capabilities – add capacity

  Network Capabilities – improve data movement speed and ease on WAN
  Internships – help to train more students in advanced research computing

Next meeting: Wednesday May 2 – tentatively. Dane will reserve room in the Union. Agenda will be sent out approximately a week in advance.

Discussion item for next time: Software & campus site licenses.

Gaussian

Materials Studio.
General purpose software that are used by multiple licenses:

CCAST pay? Licenses used by only one department/researchers, researcher or department must purchase the license? Exceptions? Special circumstances?

Dane will prepare a presentation for next meeting. Current CCAST software expenditures ~$75K/yr