

Scientific Computing Steering Committee Meeting

Conference Room B Bldg 50

MEETING MINUTES

Minutes for Thursday, April 26, 2012:

Attendees: Richard Dubois (chair), Amber Boehnlein, Ashley Deacon, Len Moss, Stuart Marshall, David MacFarlane, Cho-Kuen Ng, Yunhai Cai, Rob Cameron, Jen Gill (Recorder)
Absent: Amedeo Perrazzo, Randy Melen, Imre Kabai, Lex Kemper, Thomas Eriksson, Marc Messerschmidt, Brian Moritz
Guests: Teresa Downey, Norm Ringgold

Action items from current meeting:

Date	Action Item	Responsibility	By When
4-26-12	Update PPA Hardware projections with hardware proposal details	R.Dubois	Next meeting

Action Items status from previous meetings:

Date	Action Item	Responsibility	By When	Status
	None from previous meeting			

Agenda items:

News: Amber Boehnlein:

- There is a new CIO starting May 7th, James Williams. He is coming from NASA Ames where he has been the CIO.
- Today (Apr 26) is Amber's one year anniversary at SLAC
- An xrootd proposal was submitted to ASCR, a collaboration call between SLAC/ UCSD/ Univ of Nebraska- awaiting a funding announcement
- An LDRD was submitted for End-to-End Photon Simulation
- A new director for SRCF will be chosen soon
- Welcome to the new SCSC members, Yunhai Cai and Cho-Kuen Ng, from Accelerator Directorate

Power Outage Lessons Learned Recap: Teresa Downey

- Lessons Learned fell into several categories, including IT lessons, Power specific lessons and communications lessons, and site-wide lab lessons.
- One lesson learned: both Facilities and IT need representatives on the Emergency Operations Center Committee (EOC)
- There needs to be a strong, definitive list of what needs to be on the generator
- A major priority was to bring up email: a concern was raised that the same priority for Exchange should be given to Unix.
- In a recent infrastructure Lesson Learned, it was determined that about 120 critical servers must be on the generator, with a comment made that IT is looking to fund and execute better server coverage with more server cabinets in the future.
- Richard pointed out the importance of regular communications between various groups during an outage for update purposes: IT/ Scientific/ Facilities all need regular interactions and updates.

- Suggestion: post a timestamped recovery message periodically on the SLAC emergency page, with an estimate for when the next update would be posted.
- Also, the owners of various cell towers wanted to be able to get on site to hook up generators to their equipment, they were previously unable to do this, they will now be allowed.

FY 13 Hardware Purchase Projection: Richard Dubois

- The meeting attendees looked at the list posted on the SCSC page after having given their input to Richard prior to the meeting. Items shown were needs that currently have supporting budget.
- Norm asked if the Fermi items are additional capacity or lifecycle replacement (lifecycle).
- It was suggested that the budget for some of the groups could be combined to have wiser and more practical buying power for the purpose of Scientific Computing.
- It was suggested that a spreadsheet, rather than a wiki list, might be the easier, more user-friendly way to understand what is needed, replaceable and affordable for Scientific Computing going forward, Richard will work on this.

Data Center Planning Update: Norm Ringgold

- Norm explained current core power usage, how much space is currently available for new server racks, how much space can be freed up by “end-of-life” attrition of old server racks and how there can be data condensation to make more room on current servers.
- Actual pictures were used to demonstrate graphically the available space, where it is located and what can be used.
- Amber commented on the lab’s obligation to the incoming SRCF facility:
 1. We will be charged for the space whether we use it or not
 2. It would behoove us to figure out what will go into that space sooner rather than later
- The Black Boxes, including the ~500 EOL servers in them, will be retired on October 1st
- It is not clear that any additional buildout is needed in FY13 from current understanding of capacity and acquisitions.
- If there are any further questions or concerns about Data Center Planning and what was discussed in this meeting, please contact Norm Ringgold directly at X6288.

Scientific Computing Recharge Model: Len Moss

- The model is based on the premise of paying for 5.5 FTE from the Scientific Computing group, how that 5.5 FTE time and effort is measured and used, and by whom in the Scientific Community.
- One important use of FTE time was discussed in the meeting, the semi-annual need for hardware inventory. Amber pointed out that it takes 90 hours to do a thorough inventory, and that there needs to be better use of the person’s time. Suggestions were:
 1. Do the inventory once a year instead of twice
 2. Find a better way to access and keep track of the hardware inventory
 3. Find a way for the act of performing an inventory to go away by always having access to a real-time inventory database “at your fingertips”.
 4. A question was raised as to why it takes so much time, if the equipment essentially does not change very much, and it is the act of validation that is so time consuming.
 5. Currently, the data on inventory comes from an excel dump that is unwieldy and has no search capacity.
- A review was performed of the areas that use more of Scientific Computing FTE time, with some areas disputing the results, but finding out later that there were 6 months of data to back up the figures reported.
- Amber has requested that ALL members of the SCSC should sign off on her proposal that the inventory be done only once per year with billing based on actual effort expended. David MacFarlane said it should be signed off by all ALDs as well following a briefing to that group.

Next SCSC Meeting May 10th, 2012, 3:30 to 5 PM