

Research Computing Advisory Committee

Minutes Aug 12, 2019 (taken by Erik Deumens)

Present: Paul Avery, Peter Barnes, Erik Deumens, Bill Hogan, Damon Lamb, Lauren McIntyre, Ann Progulsky-Fox, Melissa Rethlefsen, Alberto Riva, Erik Schmidt, Laurie Taylor

Updates

- GPU for HiPerGator:
 - o We will have 608 new GPUs by end of September. 96 are in production since June; 80 will be in production by Aug 19; 80 more the week after that; 352 more will be purchased in the next few weeks.
- GUI nodes
 - o OpenOnDemand is being deployed on HiPerGator to support GUI interactive work with and without GPU acceleration.
 - o The requirement for investors to have to buy a GPU to be able to use the GUI nodes is a very heavy burden.
- Blue storage
 - o Acquisition will take place in the next few weeks, with projected in-production date of Jan 2020. It will have a large fraction of solid state and flash drive capacity.
 - o A new feature will be deployed to support small files, which has been a weakness of Lustre and which our users have, called data on metadata, also all on flash drives.
- Policy work
 - o The joint ISAC-RCAC meeting to work on the policy review will be in September.
 - o The 5-point document draft is not available yet. Erik will check with Avi.
- OneIT
 - o OneIT planning has advanced and has resulted in a number of projects being defined with people to carry them out. Listing a few:
 - To have optimal user experience with email, users will be moved to UFXchange fro UFHealth Exchange
 - A single modernized web interface to unified VPN services will be deployed
 - o The dedicated researcher support team has not been created, but existing teams commit to make things work for researchers.
- UFII programs – The new year brings the known programs at the UF Informatics Institute. A new program is that faculty can apply for funding to organize a workshop on a topic that can create interdisciplinary collaborations. See <https://informatics.insitute.ufl.edu> for details.

Discussion

The committee raised several issues that were discussed during the meeting and in emails after it.

- OneIT – Some problems, such as the management of Zeiss equipment and their controlling computers, have been considered and a workable plan has been developed. That plan should be written down and communicated so that future problems are avoided.
- OneIT – Past reorganization of IT staff in HSC colleges happened without communication until the changes were in effect, causing a lot of confusion. Is staff being made aware of changes as they are planned? Erik will find out.

The issues pertaining to RC were then discussed at the RC staff meeting with some action items to try and address the issues.

- Communication
 - o RC learned a long time ago that sending many emails to the whole list creates the impression of instability for the investors who are not active users.
 - o RC have communication tools in place that can be deployed: write notices as a news item on the RC web page and make sure the spotlight reflects status correlated with the news items
 - Tagging the news items as upgrades and maintenance and alerts may help people find relevant items
 - The current issue with the Slurm bug is an example where a short news item, that there is a bug and RC is working on it, would help active users (who go look at the website) without spamming the email list.
- Training
 - o RC has basic training, including videos.
 - o Can RC make a short test with a few questions that people are required to pass before their account is activated?
- Login nodes
 - o Slowness of the login nodes may be caused by other things including /ufrc.
 - o cgroups on the login nodes limit how many cores and RAM any user process can claim, so no one can take over the node
- What is “reasonable” on login nodes
 - o RC can make a list of example actions that are allowed and others that are not allowed, to make clear what is meant without having to create an exhaustive list of all actions; the current statement of “reasonable” is not sufficient.

Organization

Next meeting will be in Sep. 9, 2019 from 1:30 – 2:30 pm. The meeting will be in NPB 2165 and will be Zoom enabled for virtual attendance.