

MINUTES
LOUISIANA OPTICAL NETWORK INITIATIVE
MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

January 8, 2013

The Louisiana Optical Network Initiative (LONI) Management Council (MC) met at 1:00 p.m., Tuesday, January 8, 2013, in the 6th Floor Board Conference Room, Claiborne Building, Baton Rouge, LA. Mr. Charlie McMahon, Chair of the LONI Management Council, called the meeting to order. A roll call was taken and a quorum was established.

Council Members Present:

Mike Asoodeh
Beth Courtney
Gene Fields
Les Guice
Laura Levy
Thomas Lovince
Charlie McMahon
Brian Nicholls
Bettina Owens
Uma Subramanian for Jim Purcell
Michael Stubblefield
Joel Tohline
Donnie Vandal
Rachel Vincent-Finley

Council Members Absent:

Ed Driesse
Eric Setz

Guests:

Lonnie Leger, LSU
Leo Tran, Tulane
Honggao, LSU
Sam White, LSU
Greg Luebke, Juniper
Kenny Vecshens, Juniper
Angela Mastainich, BoR
Brett Brock, CISCO
Lance Neal, BoR
Scott Dean, Cray
Ramgopal Mettu, Tulane
Brent Venable, Tulane

Chair Charlie McMahon began by welcoming everyone to the meeting.

APPROVAL OF OCTOBER 9, 2012 MINUTES

On a motion from Dr. Les Guice, seconded by Dr. Joel Tohline, the LONI Management Council voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the October 9, 2012 LONI Management Council meeting.

ELECTION OF NEW OFFICERS

Chair McMahon first recognized Mr. Asoodeh, Chair of the Nominations Committee, to present the nominees as suggested by the committee. Mr. Asoodeh stated the committee nominates the following:

Dr. Joel Tohline – Chair/Chief Scientist for one year

Dr. Michael Stubblefield – Vice Chair

Mr. Charlie McMahon – Secretary/Treasurer

Mr. Asoodeh also mentioned that there are two other advisor positions, the Technology Advisor, currently held by Gene Fields, which is appointed by the Commissioner of Higher Education, and the Economic Development Advisor, currently vacant, which is appointed by the Secretary of Louisiana Economic Development.

All appointments are for two years, except Dr. Tohline.

On a motion from Dr. Laura Levy, seconded by Mr. Brian Nicholls, the LONI Management Council voted unanimously to approve the proposed slate of new officers.

With that action Mr. McMahon passed the gavel to Dr. Tohline.

INTERNET 2 UPDATE

Mr. Vandal stated that he participates in bimonthly calls with the Internet2 connector and network community in which discussions continue about the Internet2 business model transition. It looks likely that there will be lower port fees for the networks, but there will be higher participant fees for the full membership R1 institutions, which in our case would be LSU, Tulane and UNO. Internet2 appears to be proposing a rate structure that will definitely encourage 100G deployment on a broad basis. Mr. McMahon added that moving to 100G connections allows us to facilitate a “science DMZ” within our environment that will give individual researchers and others the ability to have 10G from their desktops into the national centers where they conduct their computational science.

CHIEF ADVISOR REPORTS/RECOMMENDATIONS

Mr. Leger provided a technology update and began by stating that the primary activity for the past couple of months has been growth in internet service subscriptions by campuses as a result of the price reductions on the commodity. Institutions have been using savings to increase their capacity to meet current and future service demands.

The Office of Coastal Protection and Restoration approached LONI about an allocation of Queen Bee compute cycles for its coastal modeling and planning purposes, which was approved by the Council earlier. Now, they have requested a complimentary step of providing access to the network for more effective use of their allocation on Queen Bee. Their primary contractor, Lonnie Harper Consultants, which has a satellite office at McNeese, will be allowed on the network to get into Queen Bee using a high-speed connection to off-load data to its own data storage at McNeese which will resolve issues with disc capacity, the number and frequency

of jobs of simulation, etc. Mr. McMahon stated that this was a fairly modest request which would facilitate connecting and using the Queen Bee allocation effectively. Dr. Tohline stated this is something that can be chalked up to support for economic development and State priorities and it is an important part of the LONI initiative.

Mr. Vandal inquired about the Xavier and Nicholls fiber projects. Mr. Leger stated that the Xavier project was extremely close to having all issues resolved and being finally accepted as complete. He stated that as soon as Xavier gets a contractor on board, connectivity should be built and established, and service to the campus can begin. As for the Nicholls project, as of early December they had completed 15% of the project. The best estimate currently is that around mid-February the project should be to the point where arrangements can begin for coordinating with Nicholls in order to get service to them.

Ms. Bettina Owens asked for an update on the status of addressing some of the power and redundancy issues among the New Orleans area campuses that had been discussed at the previous Management Council meeting. Mr. Leger indicated that comprehensive solutions were hampered by lack of funding, but that an alternative design had been developed and was being pursued which could address those issues in hopefully a timely manner.

Mr. Leger then discussed the interest expressed by two of the community colleges, South Louisiana Community College and Delta Community College, and the associated area technical college campuses within their regions that are looking into different ways of establishing improved and more cost-effective local networks for themselves. Mr. Leger indicated that a different way of operating the network for those campuses is being considered, which it is felt will be of benefit in two ways, one is in cost reductions through different configurations, and second, will allow us a better way of managing the network. Those changes will probably take effect over the course of the next 12 to 15 months.

Dr. Tohline asked for an update on High Performance Computing and recognized Mr. Sam White, Director of High Performance Computing to give that update. Mr. White stated that LONI systems are continuing on the same high rate of utilization. There have been some problems trying to keep the storage controller units in repair, but things have been operating pretty well. Dr. Tohline asked if the clusters and Queen Bee are holding up adequately. Mr. White stated so far, they are, but again, we are experiencing some failures on controllers. Overall, however, Queen Bee remains totally functional. Mr. McMahon asked if there were any spare cycles available and what percentage of utilization Queen Bee and the other clusters were experiencing. Mr. White responded that he did not have precise numbers with him but that Queen Bee currently runs close to 100% during the week and falls off over weekends. Mr. McMahon asked if there is still a material amount of users from the TeraGrid community and Mr. White stated that most of the TeraGrid users are gone, and that the LONI Allocation Committee has been allocating all of the CPU cycles for almost a year now.

Dr. Tohline stated that Mr. Vandal brought to his attention a few things that should be mentioned and discussed. The 2013 SCALA (Scientific Computing Around Louisiana) Conference will be held at Tulane in mid-February. He asked that this information be shared with any campus researchers that might be interested in participating.

Dr. Tohline stated there are two relatively recent NSF solicitations, the first couple of pages of which are in the members' folders. He began discussing the CC-NIE, the Campus Cyber Network Infrastructure and Engineering program. The solicitation is for campuses to improve their infrastructure, but he did suggest that folding LONIs capabilities in with the campus infrastructure is something that could be explored. He stated that LSU in last year's competition for this program had received a \$500,000 award to connect the new digital media center facility, which will house LSU's Center for Computation and Technology, and the Frey Computing Services Center where the core of LONI operations resides. There was discussion

regarding the possibility of LONI or the Board of Regents pursuing this funding, but it was reported that it had been determined that only campuses were eligible.

The other NSF solicitation that has come out recently is for continued investments in the High Performance Computing (HPC) system environments for science and engineering. Dr. Tohline explained that as NSF's strategy for supporting the science and engineering community continues to evolve, it now wants to do a mix of investments in large-scale machines like the Blue Waters installation at the NCSA computing center (University of Illinois) and Stampede at the TACC computing center (UT Austin), but also seeks investments in campuses involved in more specialized niche areas and in data intensive applications. In this latest solicitation NSF is expecting to make three awards, a couple of them at \$10 to \$12 million each for computational resources, and a third at \$6 million for data related resources. Dr. Tohline indicated that the solicitation has an April 15, 2013 submission, which is prior to the next scheduled Management Council meeting. He related that there has been some discussion of whether this opportunity should be pursued, particularly since we know that Queen Bee will need replacement in the near future. He observed that it is unknown how competitive a proposal we could prepare and submit, but we should have some discussion of whether this is something to pursue. There was discussion by the council of a possible proposal focused upon water and coastal issues, which would have relevance to state and national needs. This would be an area that Louisiana has extraordinary and increasing expertise in, particularly with the establishment of the Water Institute of the Gulf and the forthcoming BP oil spill funding. Additionally, the State Office of Coastal Protection and Restoration already depends on our high performance computing facilities and our networking capabilities for data storage to support their research and planning. It was also suggested that we might consider focusing on energy related research where we already are significantly involved through the NSF funded LA-SiGMA Project, a \$20 million research project that's really grown into a very collaborative effort leaning on LONI resources.

There was then some discussion of the environmental and physical constraints, such as power and cooling, of the ISB data center where Queen Bee is located, and whether a new HPC resource could be accommodated there. Sam White indicated that he could do some analysis of those issues and provide some information on those factors. Dr. Tohline indicated that there would be intense discussions on the LSU campus over the next couple of weeks as to whether this kind of proposal makes sense. He offered to involve anyone else who would be interested.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

Mr. Vandal stated that staff continues to pursue a variety of enhancements to the network, many at the request of campuses, as was well reflected in Mr. Leger's technology report. Mr. Vandal then reminded the council that at the last meeting he was charged to explore how Xavier University could be provided representation on the council as it becomes connected to the network. After discussions with Xavier officials which confirmed their interest, he met with Board of Regents staff to explore how Xavier should be addressed. There were concerns about setting a precedent of recognizing Xavier as a single institution with representation on the council, particularly given the current structure of membership. Basically, the current membership is that each of the four public systems has two representatives who are appointed by their system president on behalf of the schools in their system. In addition, Tulane, an original member of the network, was given two appointees to the council. There were discussions regarding how Xavier could be given representation without setting an inappropriate precedent and without disrupting the balance of representation on the council between public and private institutions. Working with Board of Regents staff, a recommendation was formulated which allowed the existing structure to remain but with the addition of a seat on the council to come from the other private institutions on the network, to be appointed by the President of Louisiana Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (LAICU). Further, there was an

understanding that LAICU's appointment of the additional seat would be Xavier University, preferably with a research interest. Mr. McMahon made a motion, seconded by Dr. Guice, that the recommendation be approved by the council.

Dr. Levy observed that each of the current public members is appointed by the President of their System and to have Xavier's member appointed by the President of LAICU is not a parallel type of selection. The System Presidents are in charge of administering their system of institutions, whereas the President of LAICU, a member organization of the private institutions, works on behalf of its member institutions but is not responsible for any administration. It was suggested that possibly the additional and third private institution representative proposed for the council be selected by the presidents of the private institutions on the network. Dr. Tohline then suggested that everyone appears to share the same objective and that there be continued discussion between now and the spring meeting with a revised recommendation prepared for consideration at that time. Mr. McMahon suggested that Mr. Vandal, Dr. Levy, and Regents staff discuss this matter further, and then asked that the motion to consider this item be deferred until the next meeting.

OLD BUSINESS/NEW BUSINESS

Dr. Levy stated that under New Business she would like the council to discuss the merits of changing the term of officers from two to four years. She questions whether two years is sufficient for an officer to completely understand their role and responsibility on the council. Mr. McMahon suggested the council think about the suggestion and have it as an item on the next agenda.

PUBLIC EVENTS IN SUPPORT OF LONI

Dr. Tohline recognized Mr. McMahon who then asked Dr. Guice to come forward. Mr. McMahon recalled earlier remarks from Dr. Tohline regarding his review of the history of LONI, but indicated that any discussion of LONI's history and successes would have to acknowledge the contributions Dr. Guice has made from inception of the network. He then gave an overview of Dr. Guice's contributions to LONI and stated that since he has been selected as the new President of Louisiana Tech University, he would be leaving the LONI Management Council. He remarked that the successes that LONI has realized, particularly the early successes, are in large part due to the leadership that Les Guice showed in the early days. He said that Dr. Guice brought people together and built a community in a challenging environment that existed in the early days. Dr. Tohline and Mr. McMahon then presented a plaque to Dr. Guice commemorating his service and leadership to the Louisiana Optical Network Initiative (LONI). Dr. Guice graciously accepted the plaque and stated that he was honored to hear that his leadership played a big part of LONI's success, when he knows it was a real team effort.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before LONI Management Council, the meeting was adjourned at 2:13 p.m.