

Executive Summary of XSEDE Advisory Board Meeting

Meeting Date: August 9th, 2017

Meeting Place: Teleconference via Skype.

Preface: *The primary topics of this meeting were updates related to the recent NSF Panel Review, and general discussion of the current funding climate and request by NSF for a mid-year review so close on the heels of this past review. Additionally, Ralph Roskies retirement was announced, and there was discussion about the succession plan (with such planning being already built into XSEDE's SOPs).*

Summary of meeting comments and XAB suggestions

Panel Review Follow-up

XSEDE was informed that NSF expected written responses to ALL panel recommendations, which was unexpected, considering the favorable tone of the review and past experience. The XAB discussion posited several explanations for this development, and the team is well positioned to respond, but the request did raise questions about how the current climate at NSF might affect XSEDE and change processes that have been customary in the past. Contributing to this concern was the request for a mid-year review.

Mid-year Review

This program has not had such a request in its history, through the many years from Teragrid to XSEDE1, so it comes as a surprise, and is troubling because of that. It also indicates an additional “gate” on spending authority, which introduces new uncertainty to the budgetary processes. The XAB discussion included various speculations for consideration, trying to match the press from NSF for “forward funding” with this new requirement. While satisfactory “progress” is always supposed to be monitored by the Program Officer, an additional formal review so closely on the heels of this most recent major review indicates a changing atmosphere within NSF, and perhaps between unseen forces (the Inspector General for NSF, for example). The XAB had no specific recommendations during this meeting, but is committed to following up as more information becomes available.

Succession Plan for Ralph Roskies

The XSEDE Program, and the XAB, have long known and appreciated the unique role that Dr. Roskies has played within the program, and the many hats he wears. Fortunately, XSEDE has a well-developed succession plan, so that while he might be irreplaceable (no one person can quite fill all the roles he has), there are plans in action to cover those roles with other (or new)

personnel. The XAB requested updates as these plans go forward. The XAB also expressed its highest appreciation for Ralph's long-standing commitment and service to XSEDE, and the Board's sadness upon learning of his retirement from the program - he will be sorely missed. While we trust the succession planning to take care of his official duties, there is little one can do to replace his passion and care and long-term husbandry of this program. The XAB commends him most highly, and wishes him well in all of his future endeavors.