Executive Summary of XSEDE Advisory Board Meeting, June 23, 2020

Meeting Date: Tuesday, June 23, 2020
Meeting Place: Teleconference via Zoom
Preface: The main topic of this call was a recap of the NSF Review
Next Call: August 28, 2020

Approval of April Meeting Minutes

- Approved.

Recap of NSF Review

- Have not received a panel report from the review yet.
- JT: Talked with Bob Chadduck last Thursday. Expect the report to be positive; had a strong, positive review.
- Bob plans to recommend year 5 funding for current award and will recommend that a 12 mo extension be awarded to take the project through Aug. 2022. Will need to go through the NSF approval process.
- Bob made a statement that XSEDE should hold itself to a higher standard when compared to other organizations;
  - Comment: in response to survey results since XSEDE uniformly receives higher ratings than most other orgs.
  - JT: should have something in the report related to this that we can respond to
- Really good review. Well prepared and a great job by the team.
- First ever remote review, which made it a bit different, but the panelists remainder engaged. Only 5 reviewers, which was a small panel compared to previous years, which were sometimes 10 or more.
- Expect to be granted the one-year extension, but it will come through normal channels from NSF. Should see it come through as formally approved in July/Aug timeframe.
- In anticipation of the one-year extension, NSF will have another year to go through the process of developing a solicitation for follow-on award. JT asked Amy Friedlander about this, as she was making contact with large award PIs. She assured John that this has been an actively discussed topic at NSF, and
they are making preparations. No timeline yet. They will need a solicitation out late this year or early next to have enough time to get through the full process before the end of the XSEDE award. No indication if this will be a single or multi-award. Hopeful that it takes a form similar to the original solicitation for XSEDE 1, which allowed people to apply for one or more elements. John expressed concern about a smooth transition for the research community.

- Comment: did you get any insider feeling on what is driving the timeline and why it’s taking so long?
  - Blueprint docs that were issued last year include a coordinated service doc that is clearly the draft of a solicitation for follow on to XSEDE. In early February XSEDE submitted an extensive response to that doc and called out some glaring shortcomings. It looked like a very CS perspective. Points we made in response that are being taken to heart. We don't know who else submitted responses to it. Blueprint had no program/coordination office. Nothing related to ECSS. Removed all workforce development activities, as they expected this to move to other programs within OAC. Not clear where they were in terms of development/writing of actual solicitation. About a year to develop a solicitation, and not sure how far along they are.

- Comment: value of a bridging grant?
  - JT: $21.8M–just under the 20% cap. When you ask for a supplement to an NSF award, if you exceed 20% of the original award it will require additional review. Purposefully it came in under that limit. At the level we submitted, it came under approval from our panel review. Understand that NSF would like to get authorization to spend for year 5 and 6 prior to October to avoid any snags with government spending in the fall. Bob has been good about making sure we can continue to spend & operate despite government shutdowns.

- JT: Can re-circulate comments XSEDE submitted in response to the blueprint if the group would like.

- Comment: XAB can help with ideas/brainstorming of what comes next. Can XAB help more than we have so far with ideas/thoughts re. what services of the future will look like and how XSEDE can address these needs in its proposal?
  - JT: given that the blueprint responses were not public, it is hard to figure out what we should do next. One point in XSEDE feedback that was comprehensive & constructive feedback, but XSEDE has no feedback to the response provided. Don't know if they can ask questions & we need to tell them things without being asked.
Comment: NSF tries to get input from the community, manage that in some form, use it to write a solicitation. Our thinking about these services is very important.

- JT: They received feedback from XSEDE and also held workshops. A formal RFI process was missing. General RFI about NSF 2030 and what folks feel is important, and this overlaps with the next XSEDE award. A lot that is relevant in that.
- Comment: How can XAB help XSEDE to write the proposal? Do we need to wait for solicitation to come out?
- JT: Planning to begin thinking about the blueprint as a solicitation & get the team together to think about how we respond to it in that form. Solicitation will look different, but this is all we have right now. In preparing what we can now, will be better prepared when solicitation comes out. We may not get it until late and have a short timeframe to respond. Expect we'll be doing some of this relatively soon. Welcome feedback/input from the panel. Have to be careful about not using project funds to develop the proposal. Need to plan for transition so it is appropriate to talk about end of award.
- Comment: Would it be feasible to try to assemble a set of responses from other institutions that might be willing to voluntarily collaborate, given the ongoing delays at NSF? Maybe no-one would be willing to share their feedback to NSF from before; but maybe they would?
- Good idea but would have to go ask people. If you know people who submitted responses please share. Would've thought NSF would have a planning grant given scope/complexity. Late in life of Tera Grid there were competing awards funded to allow for more planning. Didn't see that this time. XSEDE has not made its response public, as that could expose things that would be included in XSEDE's proposal. Could share with folks who are willing to share with XSEDE what they submitted.

- Once we get the report, the team will draft detailed responses to all recommendations/comments. Might be some items that the team would like XAB feedback on. Will see what we get and then determine whether we need to get additional XAB feedback. Regardless the report will be shared with the XAB once it is received.
- XAB member terms: if we get a one-year extension will offer the opportunity to cycle some members off. Anyone who wishes to step down should let JT know. Will then do a public call for new members.