

Executive Summary of XSEDE Advisory Board Meeting, April 17-18, 2018

Meeting Date: April 17-18, 2018

Meeting Place: Aloft Hotel, Rosemont, IL

***Preface:** This was an extended face-to-face meeting. Included was a discussion of recommendations from the January NSF panel review, a discussion of points to consider for the upcoming June NSF panel review, and presentations from each L2 area on their PY8 plan highlights. Agenda, meeting notes, and slides are available for XAB members at*

<https://confluence.xsede.org/display/XT/XAB+2018+April+Face-to-Face+Meeting>

Summary of meeting comments and XAB suggestions

January Panel Review Recommendations:

Communicating Successes:

The Board discussed ways that XSEDE can better communicate successes. It was noted that communicating scientific results to researchers is different than communicating to the general public and that images are needed. Significant results have come from XSEDE but communicating about this work requires tuning the scientific message so that it is well understood. It was suggested that we start by making simple changes in communicating to a broader audience. One recommendation was to target long-term users and highlight the impact of their research and what came out of their XSEDE allocation. We should think broadly about the success of the entire endeavor and not get trapped into marketing. Share details about the number of researchers whose science has been enabled by XSEDE and try to estimate what that would equate to in dollars, while knowing that is nearly impossible to do. We should also expand our communications about successes beyond science. It was noted that some work is being done on the ROI for XSEDE that could inform this. While ROI and cost avoidance is important to NSF, they fundamentally want to know about science impact.

Considering issues beyond lifetime of the current award

The Board discussed whether XSEDE has influence over the direction the project might take at the end of the XSEDE 2.0 award.

Longitudinal Studies

John shared that NSF would like to see more longitudinal assessments, but there is a concern about where the project would shift budget to allow for this. It was noted that NSF is looking for outcomes and specific statements. We could pick a narrow area to analyze and explain the time invested to demonstrate the high cost, but we have to be careful to not make inferences that are not there. The group discussed what we could do with a minimum investment to measure outcomes. It was noted that XSEDE has been instrumental in changing the social dynamics of how the research community interacts together, and that is important to demonstrate. John suggested that we might reach out to those for whom we have written letters of collaboration to ask about outcomes, and we could also ask them to give a presentation at a meeting and share with us how we could improve.

Supporting Other Agencies

The Board discussed that NSF and XSEDE have a cooperative agreement, and, with that, they are serving other agencies and is a joint responsibility. We should show Congress that we can work together. It was suggested that the XAB create a recommendation statement

from the XAB to NSF regarding this. It was questioned whether we should add USGS to the list.

June Panel Review Points of Interest

Benefits other organizations derive from XSEDE and their recognition of same

The Board discussed that with XSEDE's existence and social structure it has built, other agencies' staff, science, technical aspects, etc. are better able to serve their communities. XSEDE has also helped in the educational aspects such as computational science and other topics.

Issues beyond lifetime of award

The Board discussed that in considering issues beyond the lifetime of the current award, we shouldn't limit the scope – because it would not be in the best interest of the community. XSEDE has cooperative agreement to advance science in the community, and what we've learned has been valuable in defining the future so we should use this leadership role and vision and be reflective on what we've learned to help shape the future even if it doesn't involve XSEDE. It was noted that the project is designed to evolve. Issues to consider beyond scope of the award might include workforce development, security, distributed/virtual organization challenges that will persist beyond the award, etc.

Review frequency

It was noted that XSEDE devotes a great deal of administrative overhead to reporting to NSF. John questioned if there is something we could provide that would help NSF provide the necessary information to congress. The Board suggested that we should lead this conversation by asking how we can help the NSF promote this program, share ownership, and work together to get a more effective review process.

Current value against current investment

It was noted that our Program Officer is our advocate, but he is under pressure to justify the large dollar amount, and he also comes from a contract environment as opposed to a cooperative agreement partnership. It was suggested that XSEDE should define our metrics and see if NSF pushes back. While the project has devoted a great deal of work to metrics, NSF wants something "better." Ultimately, they want outcomes and impact measures. Our report should include a dialogue reflecting on how we use the metrics to define or respond. NSF also wants an analysis of the data, and we should focus on outcomes and stay at a high level. We are better positioned to talk more about this now than we were at the semi-annual review in January. John noted that it would be helpful to have a comment from the XAB supporting this notion. The Board suggested that the report shouldn't be more than 30 pages, should note major accomplishments, should provide a reflection on what was learned, and should offer major themes going forward. John noted that the IPRs report on data, while the annual report is more of a summary.

Transition Planning

The Board discussed that in terms of transition planning, XSEDE should step back and think about insights gained by meeting the needs of the community. We should outline what the imperatives are for the community to continue to go forward and high-impact opportunities or investments that have yielded success.

NSCI and Possible XSEDE Role

John has provided information on how XSEDE could support NSCI. The Board suggested that XSEDE make the case that we are well positioned to support any of those, show how

XSEDE has helped NSF meet these needs, and demonstrate the value XSEDE is contributing to these national goals.

PY8 Plan Highlights

The meeting then shifted to each L2 area sharing highlights of their PY8 plans. Slide decks and specific responses to those can be found through the link provided in the preface. High-level comments across all presentations included:

- State why you decided to do certain things.
- Be clear that a lot of work has been done to broaden SP community.
- Try to limit acronyms when speaking, and define them clearly in any written material.
- Distill to several key themes. Decide on high-level points you want to make and share core values.
- Explain what we're doing from the vantage point of the user.
- The core tenet of XSEDE was leveraging partners and organizations to accomplish the glue that would tie together the science. Presentations should be framed that way and acknowledge others' engagement. Without those partner connections, XSEDE couldn't do what it does.