

6 October 2016

Dear Nick,

The decommissioning proposal drafted by ICS-ACI has now been presented to and vetted by the ICS Coordinating Committee, the RCCI High Performance Computing Working Group (HPC WG), and the RCCI Executive Committee. We are pleased to report that the proposal was well received by all three bodies. It was also distributed to the broad legacy computers user community and the RCCI Data Centers Working Group.

The proposal dated September 12, 2016 (attached) incorporates recommendations that were made by the ICS Coordinating Committee. This version was presented to the HPC WG, where it was discussed at length. The HPC WG co-chairs then solicited and compiled input from their members, which include representatives from most of the research groups who will be impacted by the decommissioning. The HPC WG response to the September 12 decommissioning proposal is attached, verbatim. The HPC WG endorsed the outreach plan, under which the decommissioned hardware would be made available to outside organizations to enhance Penn State's outreach activities, rather than to researchers at Penn State (point 2 in the HPC WG response). The response includes four other comments, which were discussed at the RCCI Executive Committee meeting. Point 1 (requesting clarification of the role of the liaisons who will assist PIs in transitioning to ACI) and Point 3 (requesting assistance from ACI in formulating appropriate language to include in external proposals for ACI services) have already been agreed to by Jenni Evans, who was in attendance.

The Executive Committee would like to underscore points 4 and 5 of the HPC WG response. These express broad concerns regarding ACI's capacity to meet future Penn State research needs, including the demands for HPC cycles, storage, and attention of ACI IT's staff. These echo concerns that we have heard from colleagues and that we have expressed over the past several months. In particular, it is becoming increasingly evident that even with the ACI expansion that is underway, we will run out of HPC capacity at some point in 2017, likely in the first half of the year. It is important that ACI and RCCI begin as soon as possible to develop plans to mitigate the anticipated shortfall in high-end computing resources. In fact, initial steps in this direction have already been taken. Potential solutions include cloud-based computing, Data Center expansion, containerized HPC modules, or combinations of these. The options are being evaluated with respect to their utility to Penn State researchers, timeliness, risk, and cost. Given the inevitable lag between approval and availability, the situation is urgent, and will require your prompt attention in the very near future.

In summary, and in response to your memo to the RCCI Executive Committee dated July 28, 2016, **it is the unanimous recommendation of the RCCI Executive Committee that ICS-ACI should implement the decommissioning plan as presented in the attachments.** It is our hope that with this issue behind us, we will then be able to move forward quickly to address the looming capacity issues.

Drafted and circulated by Dan Haworth; delivered by Rob Hume (Dan is off at an NSF panel review).

Respectfully submitted,  
Mark Ballora  
Scott Bennett  
Guido Cervone  
Doug Cowen

Michelle Diaz  
Dan Haworth  
Rob Hume

Attachments:

- 1) ICS/ACI Decommissioning Proposal dated September 12, 2016
- 2) HPC working group response to the ICS decommissioning plans, email dated September 22, 2016