

Evaluation of the Howard University Cyberinfrastructure Workshop Hosted by MSI-CIEC

Held on June 22, 2009

Summary by Julie Foertsch, Leading Edge Evaluation & Consulting

The Minority Serving Institutions Cyberinfrastructure Empowerment Coalition (MSI-CIEC) held its sixth Cyberinfrastructure event for Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) on June 22nd, 2009 at Howard University in Washington D.C., on the opening day of TeraGrid 2009 in Arlington, VA. The daylong “workshop” was held for a small group of Howard faculty with existing interests or experience in high performance computing in order to: (1) provide an overview of cyberinfrastructure developments in education and research relevant to Howard, (2) create networking opportunities with national cyberinfrastructure organizations and experts, and (3) conduct a facilitated discussion about opportunities for the university and its faculty to obtain funding for CI infrastructure development.

The 23 participants in the event included 11 Howard University faculty from the departments of Biochemistry, Chemistry, Computer Science, Mechanical Engineering, and Physics; an Associate Vice President of Sponsored Programs and a network engineer from Howard; 5 MSI-CIEC representatives; and 5 invited presenters from other organizations/universities. In order to measure the initial impact of the event and participants’ interest in follow-up activities, attendees who were not MSI-CIEC representatives were asked to complete a 2-page survey about the event and their CI interests. Eight of those attendees replied to the survey, for a response rate of 44%. This report summarizes the feedback we received from those surveys.

1. Respondents’ background and the overall impact of CI Day on their CI awareness and interest:

The 8 respondents to the survey included 5 Howard faculty (2 of whom presented/facilitated at the event) and 3 invited presenters from other organizations/universities. Because the 3 invited presenters arguably have a very different perspective from the faculty members at Howard, I flag the invited presenters’ responses to some questions and exclude them from others.

Survey respondents were asked, “After attending this event, which statement best describes your position on the relevance of cyberinfrastructure to the work/teaching/research that *you* do?” The 5 Howard faculty responses are seen below, followed by the number of points on a 4-point rating scale that each was assigned. All 3 of the invited presenters (not shown here) predictably gave the highest rating:

0%(0) = I cannot see how it will ever be relevant. (0 pts)

0%(0) = It doesn't seem relevant now, but it might be in the future. (1 pt)

20%(1) = I can see some relevance, but don't have the time/resources to pursue it. (2 pts) (This person noted they are retired)

80%(4) = I can see a lot of relevance and am willing to work with others on finding resources or developing applications. (3 pts)

average = 2.80

2. Responses to particular CI Workshop sessions:

For each of the CI Workshop sessions that occurred, survey respondents were asked to indicate whether they attended, found it interesting, wanted to know more about that topic, or wanted to “get involved ASAP.” Table 1 shows how the survey respondents responded to each session. Note that the three presenters’ responses are not counted for the session at which each presented.

Table 1: Number of 8 respondents who attended various sessions as a non-presenter (i.e., presenters' responses to their own sessions were excluded), followed by the *percentage of those attendees* who found that session helpful, wanted to know more, or wanted to get involved ASAP.

Howard CI Day Sessions	n who attended (presenter excluded)	I found helpful, % of n	I want to know more, % of n	I want to get involved ASAP, % of n
Marlon Pierce's keynote speech giving an overview of CI	6	25% (2)	13% (1)	17% (1)
Bob Panoff on National Selected Show Case Projects with strong curriculum and education components	7	71% (5)	29% (2)	14% (1)
Rachel Finley on Louisiana Optical Network Initiative (LONI) at Southern University	7	71% (5)	14% (1)	14% (1)
Mark Matties on XSEED Supercomputer Project at Bowie State University	6	83% (5)	17% (1)	0% (0)
Heather Boyle on Internet 2	6	67% (4)	50% (3)	17% (1)
Richard Alo on MSI Cyberinfrastructure Empowerment Coalition	6	67% (4)	17% (1)	0% (0)
Dan Katz on TeraGrid	7	86% (6)	43% (3)	14% (1)
John Harkless's Overview of High Performance Computing at Howard University	7	100% (7)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Clay Gloster's High Performance Computing Infrastructure at Howard: Past, Present & Future	8	88% (7)	13% (1)	25% (2)
YaYin Fang's High Performance Computing at Howard in the Life Sciences	8	63% (6)	0% (0)	0% (0)
Discussion on High-Performance Computing and Campus Bridging at Howard, facilitated by Emmanuel Glapke	7	71% (5)	0% (0)	14% (1)

3. Follow-up opportunities with respondents who want to know and do more in CI:

Below is the contact information and stated area(s) of interest for the 6 attendees who responded to the question, "Of all the topics and ideas you heard about today, which are you most interested in following up on, and in what way?" The 3 Howard faculty with follow-up interests are listed first, followed by the 3 presenters from outside organizations and institutions:

- **Emmanuel Glapke**, Howard Univ. Prof of Mechanical Engineering, eglapke@howard.edu: "1) Collaboration with CI projects, 2) Proposals for CI use in education." He also wanted to get involved in Shodor's National Selected Show Case Projects and TeraGrid.
- **John Harkless**, Howard Univ. Assoc Prof of Chemistry, jharkless@howard.edu: "Easy, effective, reliable access to remote HPC (However, this requires University participation in HPN)." He also wanted to get involved in the Louisiana Optical Network and improving the HPC infrastructure at Howard and know more about Internet 2 and XSEED at Bowie State.

- **Sonya Smith**, Howard Univ. Assoc Prof of Mechanical Engineering, ssmith@howard.edu: “Internet 2 participation; computational infrastructure at Howard.” She also wanted to know more about the Louisiana Optical Network and TeraGrid.
- **Mark Matties**, Bowie State Asst Prof of Computer Science, mmatties@bowiestate.edu: “Forming an HBCU cloud.” He also wanted to know more about TeraGrid.
- **Heather Boyle**, Internet 2 Director of International Relations, heather@Internet2.edu: “Always difficult, but reaching out across disciplines as widely as possible.” She wanted to get more involved in “campus bridging” at Howard
- **Rachel Vincent-Finley**, LONI Institute at Southern University Asst Prof of Computer Science, revf@cmps.subr.edu: “Collaborative research possibilities w/ HU Showcase projects; Use of web-based resources in computational science and education.” She also wanted to know more about Shodor’s National Selected Show Case Projects, Internet 2, and MSI-CIEC.

4. Suggestions for how to improve CI Day events for the future:

Respondents were asked for “suggestions for how to make events like this more useful.” The four responses are below, with the first three coming from Howard faculty:

- Include students. Strategies for after the stimulus.
- Hold a full CI Day @ Howard
- We need greater presence of university decision makers
- Continued conversation, perhaps a listserv; Perhaps quarterly announcements of relevant projects funding collaborative opportunities, etc. Suggestions an external invited presenter: