

Letter from Chair Marianetti to SRCPAC in lieu of meeting  
Sent October 5, 2016

Dear SRCPAC Members,

I am writing to provide you with updates on research computing items of interest:

- **Habanero**, our new HPC system;
- The pilot of **training workshops** by Software Carpentry; and
- **RCS Consulting**, including **Amazon Web Services**.

While SRCPAC has traditionally met in the Fall and Spring, no pressing issues appear to require discussion. Therefore, my first official act as your new Chair is to update you via this letter, rather than call a Fall meeting. We will meet early in the new year, at which time we will discuss whether there is an appetite for an incremental purchase round for Habanero to take place Summer or Fall 2017.

### **HPC Systems**

As I write you, **Habanero**'s four tons of equipment are being racked, stacked, and cabled, and CUIT remains on target for go-live of our new HPC system (after thorough testing) shortly before Thanksgiving. Those four tons consist of three-and-a-half of 222 compute nodes (176 standard nodes, 32 high memory nodes, and 14 GPU nodes), and a half of 440TB of storage. Researchers purchased 196 nodes, with CUIT adding another 26 systems to be shared by all. Researchers also bought 300TB of storage, with CUIT adding 140TB with University (non-grant) funds. Some storage will be available for resale. Furthermore, A&S, and SEAS contributed funds for four nodes for educational purposes.

[Kyle Mandli](#) has agreed to chair the newly formed Habanero Operating Committee. I have asked RCS to initiate the system by mimicking as closely as possible the operating rules established by the Yeti Operating Committee. As soon as there is enough user experience data to review, Kyle will arrange for an Operating Committee meeting. Following the protocol established by the Hotfoot and Yeti OCs, operating committee meetings will be open to all interested parties at the beginning, followed by an executive session of the designated representatives. [Greg Bryan](#) has agreed to continue chairing the Yeti Operating Committee.

### **Training Workshops**

[Ryan Abernathy](#) spearheaded a very successful series of two day workshops on **Matlab, R, and Python**, conducted by [Software Carpentry](#) on September 1-2. The workshops were able to accommodate 130 people, with an additional 80 on the waitlist. I understand that the reception was so sufficiently strong that SEAS is sponsoring 2-3 workshops on Python and R (and maybe Azure); these workshops will happen during the Fall semester, with precise dates to be decided. At our February meeting, I will ask Ryan to share the results of a post-workshop survey, and recommendations for next steps.

RCS is again offering X training sessions in conjunction with Libraries and Information Services. Topics, times, and dates can be found at <http://library.columbia.edu/research/workshops.html>. In addition, RCS has established **Open Office Hours** on the first Monday of the month from 3-5pm in the Northwest Corner Building's Science & Engineering Library to help SRCPAC users with HPC challenges.

### **RCS Consulting**

RCS can consult on external resources such as **XSEDE** (Extreme Science and Engineering Discovery Environment at [www.xsede.org](http://www.xsede.org)) and **Amazon Web Services**, with whom the University has an enterprise agreement. See <http://cuit.columbia.edu/cuit/research-computing-services> for more information. I have also asked RCS to continue to investigate other opportunities.

I look forward to seeing you early next semester. In the meantime, questions and comments welcome to SRCPAC at [srcpac@columbia.edu](mailto:srcpac@columbia.edu).

Chris Marianetti, PhD  
Chair, Shared Research Computing Policy Advisory Committee (SRCPAC)  
Associate Professor, Department of Applied Physics and Applied Mathematics  
[www.columbia.edu/srcpac](http://www.columbia.edu/srcpac)